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English flower
garden

20

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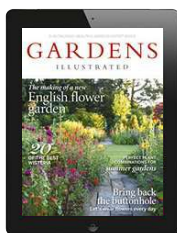
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editor's letter



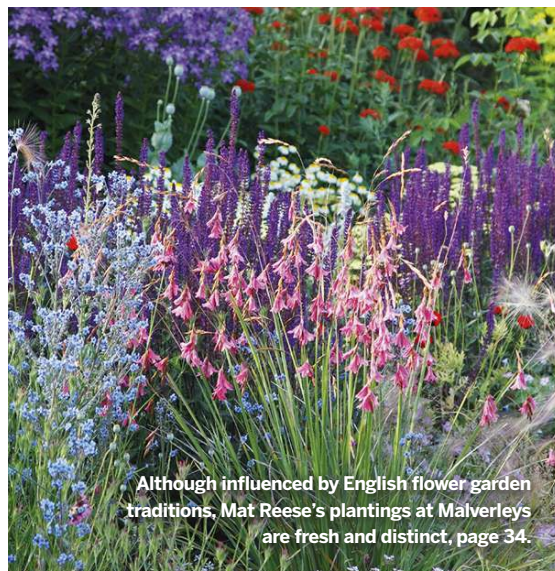
I first visited Malverleys just over four years ago, not long after head gardener Mat Reese began working there. I've been back a number of times since and it's been wonderful to witness each new area unfolding. Driven by a passion for finding the very best plants, and a love of the English flower garden traditions, Mat has succeeded in creating a garden with an extraordinary style of its own. For me the best gardens are where great

planting meets clever, understated design; where the attention to detail and ongoing care are uncompromising, yet the garden maker is confident enough to allow for a certain amount of happenstance. Many of the gardeners and designers that we feature have a passion, some might say obsession, for plants. Marina Christopher, whose nursery specialises in good garden perennials especially those beneficial to pollinators, offers ten of her favourite plants for June; National Collection holder Chris Lane discusses 20 of the best wisteria and gives advice on how to grow them. We also take a look at the history of the buttonhole and launch our campaign to return these miniature posies to their rightful place on the nation's lapels. If you'd like to join in, then please post a picture of yourself wearing one via our social media channels using #BringBacktheButtonhole (see gardensillustrated.com for links). Look out for us at this year's GROW London, an exciting, contemporary garden fair held on Hampstead Heath on 24-26 June; we'll be sure to be wearing flowers. I hope you enjoy the issue.



Save money when you **subscribe to the digital edition** – see page 32

Juliet



Although influenced by English flower garden traditions, Mat Reese's plantings at Malverleys are fresh and distinct, page 34.



Join our campaign to bring back the buttonhole, and be inspired by these miniature posies, page 50.

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS



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Plantsman and head gardener at Great Dixter in East Sussex.



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Kew-trained gardener, author and television presenter.



DAN PEARSON
Garden designer, plantsman and columnist.

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Malverleys.
Photograph by
Annaïck Guitteny

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SIETSKEDVRIES, SABRINA ROTHE

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subscription to
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contributors



PAUL DEBOIS

STEPHANIE DONALDSON

As well as being the author of many gardening books, Stephanie writes for *Country Living* and *The Garden* and blogs as The Enduring Gardener. She lives in Hastings and this month visits the garden at nearby Fairlight End – see page 44.

"As someone who also has a hillside garden, I found plenty of inspiration and clever solutions when I visited Fairlight End."



ANNAÏCK GUITTENY

CHRIS LANE

Chris was trained in nursery stock production at Hadlow College, where he has subsequently worked as a lecturer. With a great interest in plant propagation, he now runs his own nursery and holds four National Plant Collections. Read his profile on *Wisteria* on page 66.

"What a pleasure to write an article on wisteria. For me the excitement increases rapidly as flowering time approaches."



CHARLIE RYRIE

Twelve years ago Charlie founded The Real Cut Flower Garden, providing relaxed arrangements of home-grown flowers for events and weddings. She loves unfussy, simple and unusual flower combinations. Be inspired by her gorgeous buttonhole posies on page 50.

"My own style is through a hedge backwards, so perhaps that's why I love buttonholes for that whiff of floral elegance."



ANNAÏCK GUITTENY

When not working on her series of 'Seascapes' recording winter storms, Annaïck travels widely – especially in her home country of France – to photograph gardens and plants for numerous magazines. See page 34 for her shots of the romantically planted Malverleys garden in Hampshire.

"It has been a real pleasure to witness and record the development of the gardens at Malverleys over the past couple of years."

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Where and when

Held on Hampstead Heath, GROW London runs from 24-26 June 2016. On the evening of Thursday 23 June there is a special Garden Party Charity Preview. Find out more at growlondon.com

How to enter our competition

We have five pairs of tickets to the Garden Party Charity Preview* held on Thursday 23 June, 6-9pm. At this special preview event, you'll be among the first to choose plants and products to buy, plus enjoy complimentary cocktails and receive a GROW tote bag, perfect for carrying home plants and shopping. For your chance to win tickets to the Garden Party Charity Preview, please answer the following question.

Which charity is the beneficiary of this year's GROW London?

By post Send your answer on a postcard along with your name, address, telephone number and/or email to
Gardens Illustrated 235/GROW, PO Box 501, Leicester LE94 0AA.

Online at gardensillustrated.com

Closing date 12 June 2016

* Garden Party tickets also allow entry to the fair throughout public opening hours on 24-26 June.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS.

1 Promoter: *Gardens Illustrated*, Immediate Media Co, Bristol. 2 Entrants must be UK residents aged 18 years or older, excluding the Promoter's employees. 3 By entering you agree to be bound by all the rules of the promotion. 4 Only one entry per person allowed. 5 No responsibility accepted for lost, delayed, illegible or fraudulent entries. 6 Closing date for entries is midnight on 12 June 2016. 7 There are five prizes of a pair of tickets to GROW London Garden Party Charity Preview on Thursday 23 June 2016, and a complimentary GROW tote bag. 8 Winners will be notified within 2 days and must then contact *Gardens Illustrated* within 3 days to confirm their prize. 9 The draw is final and no correspondence will be entered into. 10 For details of the winners send an SAE to Immediate Media Company Bristol within two months of the closing date. If any winner is unable to be contacted within one week of the closing date, the Promoter will offer the prize to a runner up. 11 Promoter reserves the right to substitute the prize with one of the same or greater value but there is no cash alternative. 12 The promotion is subject to the laws of England. 13 Immediate Media Company Limited (publishers of *Gardens Illustrated*) would love to keep you informed by post or telephone of special offers and promotions from the Immediate Media Company Group. Please write 'Do not contact: Immediate Media Co Ltd' if you would prefer not to receive these. *Gardens Illustrated* would like to keep you informed of special offers and other promotions by newsletter, email or text message. Please write your email address and mobile number on your postcard if you would like to receive these. You may unsubscribe from these at any time. 14 GROW London would like to keep you informed of newsletters, special offers and other promotions by email or text message. Please write 'Do not contact: GROW London' on your entry if you would prefer not to receive these.



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Exclusive Reader Events 2016



Monday 20 June 2016

Celebrating Great Dixter

Join head gardener Fergus Garrett and garden writer Anna Pavord at Great Dixter to celebrate Christopher Lloyd's legacy and reflect on the garden's ongoing evolution

Great Dixter was the home of the late, great gardener and gardening writer Christopher Lloyd who spent a lifetime creating, refining and experimenting in the garden.

For our reader event, which marks ten years since Christo's death, world-renowned head gardener Fergus Garrett is joined by writer and friend of Christo, Anna Pavord, who will celebrate this legendary gardener's legacy and consider what Great Dixter achieves today in terms of gardening education and excellence.

Event details

- **Date** Monday 20 June 2016.
- **Venue** Great Dixter, Northiam, Rye, East Sussex TN31 6PH.

PROGRAMME

- **10.30am-2pm** Guests invited to enjoy the gardens at their leisure.
- **2-4.20pm** Talk from Fergus Garrett and Anna Pavord in the Great Hall (with a break at 3pm for refreshments).
- **4.30pm** Tea, scones, strawberries and a glass of Champagne Taittinger.

TICKETS

- Ticket £100, must be booked in advance.

Tickets and directions will be sent out prior to the event. Places are limited so booking is essential. Please advise us when booking of any dietary requirements or accessibility queries. For more details about the day itself call Great Dixter on 01797 254048 or go to greatdixter.co.uk. Great Dixter, Northiam, Rye East Sussex TN31 6PH.

TO BOOK
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A transaction fee applies to all bookings. [†]Calls will cost 10p per minute plus your telephone provider's access charge. Call charges from mobile phones may vary. *Gardens Illustrated* reserves the right to replace either of the speakers with other speakers of equal stature in the unlikely event that either of them is unable to attend. Tickets must be booked in advance.



Friday 24 June 2016

Garden tour at Highgrove

We are delighted to offer readers the chance to attend a special tour of the glorious gardens at Highgrove, the private home of TRH The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall

Over 35 years in the making, the garden at Highgrove is one of the most creatively inspired in the world. A series of interlinked areas, each with its own character and purpose, weave around the house, reflecting the gardening ideals and organic principles of HRH The Prince of Wales. Your informative guided tour will allow you to appreciate the varied planting of the garden in its midsummer glory, with scent and colour in abundance. Highgrove Champagne and delicious canapés will be served after your tour.

Event details

- **Date** Friday 24 June 2016. • **Venue** Highgrove Garden, Tetbury, Gloucs.

PROGRAMME

- **5pm** Arrival, tea, coffee and handmade biscuits on the terrace.
- **5.30pm** Tour of the garden, lasting approximately two hours.
- **7.30pm** Highgrove Champagne and canapés served, plus the opportunity to browse the Highgrove Estate Shop (10% discount on any purchases).
- **9pm** Approximate finish.

TICKETS

- Tickets cost £95 per person. Places are limited so we recommend booking early to avoid disappointment. Tickets include a Highgrove guide book in a gift box, sent in advance, plus a *Gardens Illustrated* goodie bag.

All profits from Highgrove Garden Tours, products and events are donated to HRH The Prince of Wales's Charitable Foundation.

Tickets are non-refundable and cannot be exchanged. We reserve the right to change any element of an event due to circumstances beyond our reasonable control. By attending the event you agree to be photographed and waive all rights, including moral rights, in any photography. Full details will be sent with a confirmation letter.

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[†] Lines are open Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm. Calls are charged at local rates from UK landlines. Calls from mobiles may cost considerably more. Tickets must be booked in advance.



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PHOTO COMPETITION

Capture the castle

Beneath the imposing battlements of St Michael's Mount off the Cornish coast is a unique garden that seems to cling to the island's granite cliff face. As part of its Coastal Garden season, which runs until 1 July, the National Trust property is inviting visitors to post any images they take of the garden on its social media channels and enter the #seagarden competition. The season also includes talks and guided tours of the spectacular gardens which, although battered by salty winds, benefit from a microclimate tempered by the Gulf Stream, allowing succulents, palms and exotic plants such as *Strelitzia reginae* to grow happily. For details visit stmichaelsmount.co.uk



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ROSE FESTIVAL

Blooming lovely

Immerse yourself in the heady scent of midsummer roses including the lovely white rambler *Rosa 'Seagull'* (shown here), during Rose Weekend (18-19 June) at RHS Rosemoor, in Devon. Part of the garden's month-long rose festival, the weekend offers expert advice on rose identification and the opportunity to buy unusual cultivars as well as rose-care products. You can also take a guided walk around the stunning rose gardens and browse the floral-themed craft market. Gardens are open 10am-6pm each day and entry to the festival is included in the normal garden admission price. rhs.org.uk

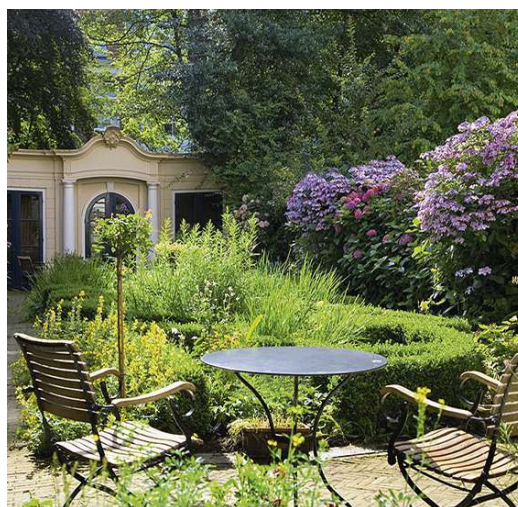
RHS



NEW CULTIVAR

Flavour of France

A new self-supporting, primocane raspberry from DT Brown is available to buy from early June. Raspberry 'Paris' has an upright habit, which makes it ideal for growing in pots or containers, and is a double-cropper: producing fruit once in the autumn and again in June if the canes are left rather than cut down. Its large, conical berries are packed with aromatic, sweet and juicy flavours. One well-established plant in a 9cm pot costs £8.95 from dtbrownseeds.co.uk



OPEN GARDEN DAYS

Behind closed doors

If you've ever wished you could take a peek behind some of the houses that line Amsterdam's canals, then the Open Garden Days, 17-19 June, offers you the chance to do just that. More than 30 gardens open for the weekend, offering enthusiasts the chance to see the normally hidden formal parterres, contemporary planting and remarkable gardens. A passe-partout offers access to all the gardens for €20 (€18 in advance) from museumvanloon.nl

SCENTED REPELLENT

Deter pesky insects this summer with a citronella candle in a stylish cream and black holder from Heyland & Whittle. Its luscious lemon-like fragrance masks the scents insects find attractive, allowing you to enjoy al fresco dining in peace. £6 each from heylandandwhittle.co.uk





EXHIBITION

Dutch masters

Dutch Flowers, a new exhibition at the National Gallery, London, explores Dutch flower painting from its origins in the early 17th century to its peak in the late 18th century. Featuring works, such as *Floral Still Life*, 1671 by Dirck de Bray (left), this free exhibition is the first of its kind in the UK for more than 20 years. Until 29 August, 10am-6pm. nationalgallery.org.uk

NEW NURSERY

Baby steps

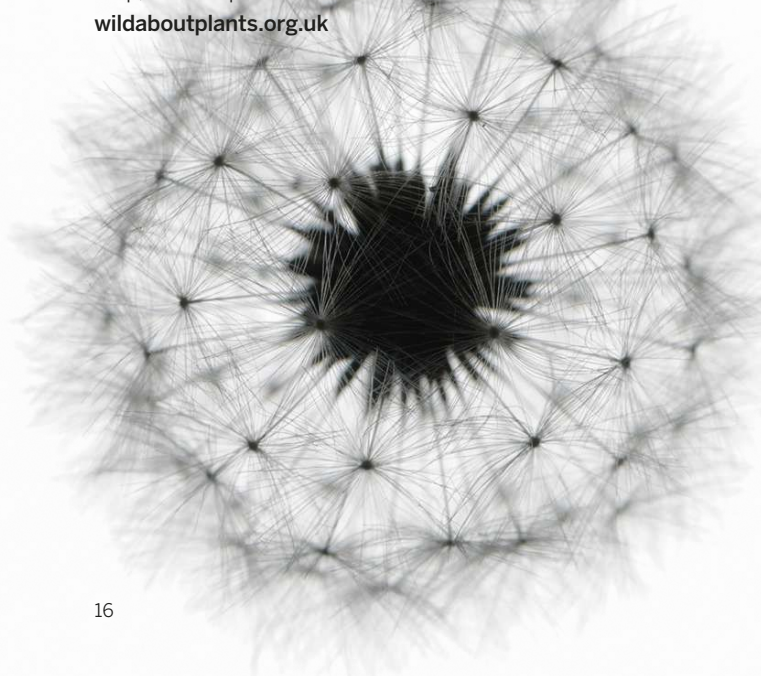
Kilver Court in Somerset has opened a new garden nursery offering an eclectic mix of British-grown, herbaceous, alpine and subtropical plants from specialist growers. Many of the plants on offer are those the Kilver Court and Mulberry founder Roger Saul is using as part of his extensive plans to restore Kilver Court gardens. kilvercourt.com



SURVEY

Time to go wild

Wild-flower charity Plantlife was shocked in 2013 to discover that 70 per cent of the children it surveyed had never told the time with a dandelion clock. In an attempt to revive interest in forgotten British wild flowers, Plantlife has teamed up with cereal company Nature's Path to encourage children across the UK to take part in a survey. The charity hopes that by challenging them to spot 15 common wild flowers and record their findings on an interactive map, it will help them to reconnect with nature. wildaboutplants.org.uk



Diary



• Festival of Gardens

A new nine-day festival will highlight a selection of relatively unknown gardens surrounded by Snowdonia's stunning scenery. 28 May – 5 June. See website for details of ticket prices and gardens. Tel 01492 531731, gardensnorthwales.co.uk

• Claire Austin Open Day

Perennials expert Claire Austin opens her private garden for two days this month. 4 and 16 June, 10am-4pm, Claire Austin Hardy Plants, White Hopton Farm, Wern Lane, Sarn, Newtown, Powys SY16 4EN. Tel 01686 670342, claireaustin-hardyplants.co.uk

• British Flowers Week

Celebrate British-grown, flowers and the work of independent florists at London's New Covent Garden Flower Market. 13-19 June. britishflowersweek.com

• GROW London

The contemporary garden fair returns to Hampstead Heath showcasing more than 100 exhibitors of rare plants and flowers, pots, planters, accessories and tools, and outdoor furniture. 24-26 June, 11am-6pm, £16. Lower Fairground Site, East Heath Road, Hampstead, London NW3 1TH. growlondon.com

• Garden Open Day at

Rockcliffe and Upton Wold Two Cotswold gardens, Rockcliffe and Upton Wold, will open in June to raise funds for the Garden Museum. 25 June, 10am-6pm. £15 each or £25 for two. Tel 07941 308379 (Rockcliffe) or 01386 700667 (Upton Wold) or visit gardenmuseum.org.uk

• Woburn Abbey Garden Show

Now in its seventh year, the show has been extended to include handmade gifts and gardening products plus a new area for independent food suppliers. 25-26 June, 10am-5pm. £11.50. Woburn Abbey Gardens, Woburn, Bedfordshire MK17 9WA. Tel 01525 290333, woburnabbey.co.uk

• Marina Christopher course

Plantswoman Marina Christopher takes a break from writing her *Gardens Illustrated* column to host a series of plantsman days at Bury Court in Surrey. Her Red, white and blue event in June celebrates HM the Queen's 90th birthday. 29 June, 11.30am-2pm. £7.50. Bury Court, Bentley, nr Farnham, Surrey GU10 5LZ. Tel 01420 560695, burycourtarn.com



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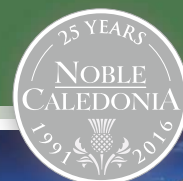


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Experience hidden Croatia aboard the charming Royal Eleganza. The region offers breathtaking natural beauty, intriguing history, stunning architecture and a wonderfully tranquil and peaceful atmosphere. Our unique cruise covers the coast and rivers of Croatia with the additional benefit of mooring in the immediate vicinity of town centres allowing for evenings spent ashore.

Our itinerary includes a range of scenic delights – the Zrmanja Gorge, the world-famous Kornati Islands, plus the dramatic waterfalls of Krka and the River Cetina which whilst relatively unknown is surrounded by some truly magnificent scenery. We also visit the historic towns of Zadar, Sibenik, Split and Dubrovnik, with their history dating back through the Middle Ages to the Roman Era and the delightful islands of Hvar and Korcula, with their marble streets and impressive architecture.

The Itinerary in Brief

Day 1 London to Dubrovnik, Croatia. Fly by scheduled flight. Upon arrival enjoy lunch before transferring to the Royal Eleganza where the crew will welcome us aboard. Dinner is then served and the ship moors overnight.

Day 2 Dubrovnik & Korcula. After breakfast, enjoy a guided walk through this breathtaking city. Dubrovnik's many historic and cultural treasures have earned it designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. See the major attractions such as the Rector's Palace, the Romanesque-Gothic Dominican and Franciscan Monasteries, and the Sponza Palace. Relax on board this

afternoon as we sail to Korcula. Enjoy some free time here before dinner on board.

Day 3 Hvar. This morning we sail to Hvar. Arrive this afternoon and take a tour to the Old Town starting in the main square which is the largest piazza in Dalmatia. We will also see the cathedral, and the palatial quarter of Grad and the more humble residential area of Burg. Return to the ship to dine on board.

Day 4 River Cetina & Split. Cruise this morning to Omis. Here we will board small boats for the trip along the valley of the emerald green River Cetina. Over centuries, the river has cut a magnificent canyon into

the mountains surrounding it.

We arrive at Radmanove mlinice (Radman's Mills). Dating from 1722, the mill was used to grind cereals for the inhabitants of Omis. Sail for Split where we will moor overnight and this evening have the chance to dine in one of the many restaurants on the Riva promenade.

Day 5 Split & Sibenik. Enjoy a guided walking tour this morning through this fascinating city. See the Palace of Diocletian and the Old Town. Later, set sail for the historic town of Sibenik. Visit the Cathedral of St. James, and the St. Nicholas Fortress. There is a further opportunity to dine independently tonight in one of the local restaurants.

Day 6 Krka National Park & Zadar. Today we will visit the spectacular waterfalls of Krka. We will take a walk along wooden jetties and bridges to admire the falls, and the unique flora and fauna. This afternoon we set sail for Zadar, passing through the group of islands making up the world famous archipelago of the Kornati National Park. Tonight, dine independently ashore in one of the many local restaurants.

Day 7 Zadar & Zrmanja Gorge. After breakfast, join the guided walk through Zadar, after which there will be an excursion to the Zrmanja Gorge. We will board a motor launch for the one hour cruise to Obrovac, where we will enjoy a lunch of local specialties before taking a walk. Return to the Royal Eleganza and meet later for the Captain's Dinner.

Day 8 Zadar to London.

Disembark this morning and transfer to Split for your scheduled flight to London.

2017 Departure Dates, Prices & Inclusions

Dubrovnik to Zadar: 1st, 15th, 29th May; 12th, 26th June; 4th, 18th September

Zadar to Dubrovnik: 24th April; 8th, 22nd May; 5th, 19th June; 11th, 25th September (Itinerary is the reverse of that shown and can be viewed at www.noble-caledonia.co.uk)

Prices per person based on double occupancy range from **£1895** for a category 1 cabin to **£2895** for a category 3 cabin. Cabins for sole use from **£2895**.

What's Included:

- Economy class scheduled air travel
- Seven nights aboard the Royal Eleganza, breakfast and lunch daily
- Dinners on days 1, 2, 3 and 7.
- Wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner onboard
- Shore excursions
- Noble Caledonia Manager
- Gratuities
- Transfers

NB. Ports and itinerary subject to change. Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations are available on request. Travel insurance and dinners on days 4, 5 and 6 are not included in the price.

Royal Eleganza

For this unique itinerary we have chartered the 31 passenger Royal Eleganza. This beautifully crafted vessel was built in 2012 specifically for sailing the Dalmatian Coast. She features a spacious Sun Deck with adequate shade for all passengers to relax outside; complemented with a bar and comfortable sun loungers, it is the perfect place to watch the passing scenery. Dining on board is a casual affair with lunch and dinner featuring locally sourced fresh food including fresh fish. In good weather we will enjoy a barbecue, and you may wish to eat al fresco. The 16



cabins are each equipped with a safe, air conditioning/heating, hairdryer and a flat screen TV. Each cabin also has an en-suite bathroom with shower. With just 31 like-minded passengers, the atmosphere onboard is friendly and informal.



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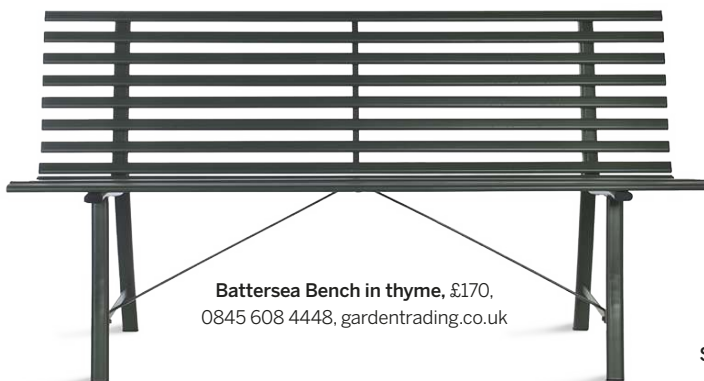
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Sambucus nigra f. *porphyrophylla*
'Thundercloud'

In early summer, sweetly fragrant, pale-pink flowers emerge from clusters of deep-red flower buds to the delight of insects and humans alike. This wonderful elder cultivar was spotted by plantsman Christopher Sanders as a sport on a branch of the purple-leaved cultivar 'Guincho Purple' at the Dorothy Clive Garden in Staffordshire. With the owner's permission he successfully propagated some cuttings and it was released by Bridgemere Nurseries in 1997. AGM¹.

Height 4m.

Origin Sport of *Sambucus nigra* f. *porphyrophylla* 'Guincho Purple'.

Growing conditions Most soils including alkaline.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-7b.

Season of interest Spring to autumn.



June plants

Plantswoman and ecologist Marina takes delight from the heady scents and sights of early summer in her selection of favourite plants for June

WORDS MARINA CHRISTOPHER PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

Marina Christopher

is a plantswoman who owns Phoenix Perennial Plants in Hampshire*.



Linum narbonense

For me, this is the choicest blue flax I have grown. It is not often seen in the trade and inferior plants, possibly *Linum perenne*, are often sold under its name. It is distinct in holding clusters of upright flower buds, whereas other species have pendent buds. It also has a rather unruly habit, in that its many branches are held at 45-degree angles to the stem giving it a very angular appearance. In sun the large, azure-blue flowers unfurl with darker blue guidelines to lead insects into the funnel-shaped bloom to its clear white eye.

Height 45-60cm.

Origin Western and central Mediterranean, northern Spain, northeast Portugal.

Growing conditions Well-drained soil; sun.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest Late spring to summer.

Papaver orientale 'Lauren's Lilac'

Oriental poppies are stunning show stoppers in June and early July but leave a huge gap once the flowers have finished so you'll need to grow later herbaceous perennials to fill the space. 'Lauren's Lilac' is a subtle, black-blotched cultivar with lilac-mauve-infused petals raised from a seedling of 'Patty's Plum' by Valerie and David Menzies in Hampshire, and named after their granddaughter. Unlike 'Patty's Plum' it's less prone to burning and browning of the petals in direct sun.

Height 1m.

Origin Southwest Asia.

Growing conditions Rich soil; sun or dappled shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 2a-9b.

Season of interest Early summer.



Orlaya grandiflora

This pretty annual, a relative of cow parsley, is popular for naturalistic plantings. It has fine, filigree foliage and large, flat-headed umbels of white flowers with much enlarged outer petals. Most umbellifer seeds require sowing fresh in autumn and winter so they receive a freeze/thaw regime that breaks down the inhibitors to germination. *Orlaya grandiflora* germinates readily in autumn but can be erratic in spring. Occasionally, the foliage turns yellow and mature plants collapse for no apparent reason; usually the result of carrot fly. AGM.

Height 30-45cm.

Origin Mediterranean.

Growing conditions Sharply drained, lean soil; sun.

Hardiness RHS H4.

Season of interest Summer.



Salvia pratensis 'Indigo'

The meadow clary is one of two salvia species native to the British Isles, with blue flowers. In recent years, seed companies have offered a range of colour forms from white and pink to blue and purple. *Salvia pratensis* 'Indigo' was raised by Thomas Carlile at Loddon Nurseries in Twyford, Berkshire. It has a rosette of foliage and rather lax flower stems with a form resembling an upside-down pyramid so its top is wider than its base. The violet-blue, flower spikes are large for this species and very attractive to bees. This cultivar is raised by cuttings. AGM.

Height 90cm.

Origin Europe.

Growing conditions Well-drained soil; sun.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 7a-11.

Season of interest Summer.

Paeonia veitchii 'Alba'

When I first discovered this lovely peony I was told that it was 'as rare as hen's teeth' and this still appears to be the case. In late spring the deeply dissected foliage is a bronzy green, maturing to deep green during the summer months. Tight green and pointed pendent buds appear at the end of flowering stems and as they develop the palest pink, tightly rolled petals are evident. The slightly nodding flowers open to a pristine white with a central boss of yellow stamens emitting the most delicate, sweet fragrance.

Height 60-75cm.

Origin China.

Growing conditions Moisture-retentive soil; sun or dappled shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 6a-8b.

Season of interest Late spring to summer.



Papaver dubium subsp. *lecoqii* 'Albiflorum'

I first saw this delightful annual poppy, with small, tissue-like, pink petals and a white blotch towards the base, at Great Dixter where it has happily seeded around; its little pink heads bobbing around in the slightest breeze, cheek-by-jowl with other treasures creating a wonderful mosaic of colours and textures. The Beth Chatto garden was the source of the Great Dixter seed and the poppy is fondly called 'Beth's poppy'. Cleve West used it in his gold medal-winning garden at the 2014 Chelsea Flower Show.

Height 60cm.

Origin Europe.

Growing conditions Well-drained soil; sun.

Hardiness RHS H4.

Season of interest Early summer.

Places to visit

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best

When the flowers of *Sambucus nigra* are fully open, a heady fragrance fills the air reminding us of balmy summer evenings sipping elderflower cordial. To see a fine collection visit **Cotswold Garden Flowers**, where Ed Brown holds the National Collection of *Sambucus* and has bred many of the cultivars planted on the site. Call before visiting. Gibbs Lane, Offenham, Evesham,



Worcestershire WR11 8RR.
Tel 01386 47337.

The delightful Beth's poppy is at its best when it has happily seeded around and put itself into places it favours. With careful garden editing, self-seeders can look natural and inspiring. Nowhere is this achieved more successfully than at **Great Dixter**, the home of the late, great Christopher Lloyd and overseen so

Verbascum 'Petra'

Mulleins have always been popular for their tall flower spikes, which provide useful vertical accents in the garden. Most are yellow with purple stamens or occasionally white. A few species, notably *V. phoeniceum*, exhibit a colour range from white to purple. Hybridisation of *V. phoeniceum* and various perennial yellow species has resulted in some wonderful colour breaks. *V. 'Petra'* has unusual reddish-brown flowers and is one of several cultivars bred by Vic Johnstone and Claire Wilson who formerly held the National Collection of *Verbascum*.

Height 1.2m.

Origin Garden hybrid.

Growing conditions Well-drained soil; lightly dappled shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Summer.



Gillenia trifoliata

This plant has been one of my favourite hardy perennials since I started my first nursery more than 30 years ago. It is still one of my top ten plants as it exhibits great qualities throughout its growing season. Although a woodlander in its native country, I have found it performs best in full sun with a moisture-retentive soil. Pink shoots emerge in spring, its delicate white flowers are subtended by a showy red calyx, followed by beautiful seedheads and the foliage turns crimson in autumn. What more could you ask for? AGM.

Height 60-90cm.

Origin Northeastern USA, Canada.

Growing conditions Moisture-retentive soil; sun or dappled shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

Season of interest Spring to autumn.



Zizia aurea

My interest in the umbellifer family (*Apiaceae*) tempted me to try some of the North American species and *Z. aurea* is one I have grown for several years. It has attractively dissected foliage and forms a rounded mound before it sends up sprays of small, yellow flowers in late spring and early summer. It is found in meadows and damp woods in its native habitat and appears relatively tolerant of most garden soil as long as it isn't too dry. Exhibited in recent show gardens at the Chelsea Flower Show, it is deservedly gaining attention.

Height 60-90cm.

Origin Eastern Canada, southern USA.

Growing conditions Moisture-retentive soil; sun or dappled shade.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.

Season of interest Late spring to summer.

brilliantly by head gardener Fergus Garrett. Northiam, Rye, East Sussex TN31 6PH. Tel 01797 252878, greatdixter.co.uk

Emerging peony foliage with its mahogany-red shoots suggests rich promise of things to come. Visit **West Green House Gardens** and discover massed planting of peonies along the dragon walk. West Green House Gardens,

Thackham's Lane, nr Hartley Wintney, Hook, Hampshire RG27 8JB. Tel 01252 844611, westgreenhouse.co.uk

Sages are one of the most diverse plant families in flower colour, foliage, habitat and size. There is a salvia to suit almost any soil or situation found in the British Isles. To see an amazing range of sages visit the National Collection



of salvia species held by **John and Lynsey Pink**. This is a wonderful plantsman's garden. Alongside the incredible range of salvias, are some interesting shrubs and several *Impatiens* species. Visitors by appointment only. 2 Hillside Cottages, Trampers Lane, North Boarhunt, Fareham, Hampshire PO17 6DA. Tel 01329 832786.

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When it comes to courgettes Jojo discovers that small is beautiful

WORDS JOJO TULLOH ILLUSTRATIONS SARAH YOUNG

After all the hard work of propagating, transplanting, feeding and weeding, the gardener may well be tempted to leave rows of evenly spaced lettuces, carrots and beetroots intact, while the cook demands a steady supply of varied ingredients. Conflict arises for you as harvest gaps appear. If this causes the gardener in you pain, remind yourself that in a vegetable garden function must come before form. Your garden has a higher purpose than mere decoration – to provide you with the freshest ingredients picked in their prime.

This often means not letting them get too big. The tradition of the show bench with its gargantuan, tasteless crops is an invidious one, and something Ambrose Heath in *The Country Life Cookery Book* suggests ‘every cook... should fight to the death’. Nowhere is this more applicable than with courgettes, which are at their most sublime small. A good rule of thumb is to pick the courgettes not much longer than your index finger. Picking small also helps keep a check on glut.

I have grown many different courgettes from the conventional dark-green, cylinder-shaped ‘Bambino’ and ‘Nero Di Milano’ to the spherical ‘Tondo Chiaro Di Nizza’ (good for stuffing), which is best harvested at the size of a cricket ball, and ‘Tromboncino d’Albenga’, a trailing or climbing cultivar (useful if you want to maximise space by growing up) with amusing long, curling, pale-green fruits best harvested at around 25cm long. Franchi Seeds (seedsofitaly.com)

has cultivars from all over Italy, including ‘Da Fiore Toscana’, which produces few fruits and mainly male flowers, so ideal for those who prefer the flowers, which are delicious stuffed or dipped in batter. I adore the taste of yellow crookneck squash but find it too slow to get going so instead I am planting ‘All Green Bush’ (realseeds.co.uk), which is dark green with plentiful fruits over a long cropping period and ‘Verde d’Italia’, a good early courgette with a very fine flavour.

Couch grass is one of the most persistent weeds on the allotment. The roots spread in from turf edges and digging can exacerbate the problem, as any small pieces of root left behind will regrow. At Organiclea, a vegetable growing co-operative in Chingford, Essex, they edge their beds with vigorous growing plants, such as comfrey or Jerusalem artichoke. The aggressive nature of these plants forms a barrier and prevents the couch grass from spreading. This may only work if you have lots of space, otherwise a duckboard edging with a lip of weed suppressant fabric twice as deep as the wood and stapled down either side is better. Another useful plant for weed suppression is *Tagetes minuta*, known in the Andes as ‘the sacred weed’ for its helpful effect on eelworm in potatoes. This tall, small-flowered marigold has roots that secrete thiophenes (substances containing sulphur), which have prophylactic effects on bindweed, ground elder and to a lesser extent couch grass. ▷

WHAT TO DO NOW

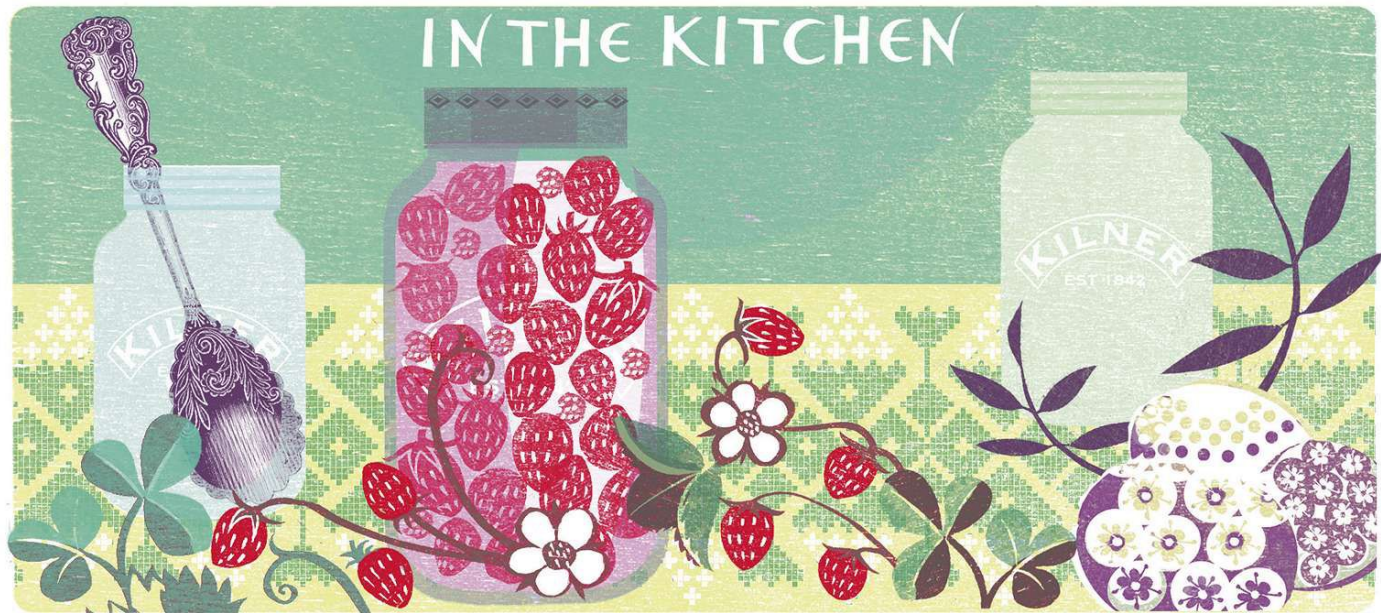
- If gaps in your display really bother you, try keeping a few of each of your cultivars growing on in modules or small pots and transplant into any spaces as these occur. Now is the time to think ahead and sow (but only after the longest day) chicories for winter eating. The pale, speckled-red

rosettes of ‘Variegata di Castelfranco’ (chilternseeds.co.uk) are popular with good reason but there are many others all highly tolerant of cold and wet.

- As you harvest, sow quick-growing seeds, such as salad mixtures, radishes, marigolds and nasturtiums, into empty patches. If you’re planning

a three sisters bed [issue 234, page 32], plant out sweet corn, pumpkin and beans now. Transplant cucumbers, aubergines and tomatoes into suitably hot and sunny corners. I chop a few comfrey leaves (rich in potash) and put them underneath each transplant as it goes in and feed weekly with comfrey

tea. Stake your tomatoes (or grow up a string suspended from a pole) and pinch out side shoots. After lifting new potatoes, sow mustard to prevent eelworm and to enrich the soil. Trample it down after 8-10 weeks and dig it in to break down like a spread-out layer of compost heap direct into the soil.



Courgettes are, according to that ever-wise French cookery writer Édouard de Pomiane, as ‘delicate as asparagus or new garden peas.’ I agree, picked small they are a great delicacy and should be cooked with care. I never let courgettes near water, preferring to bake, steam, fry or grill them.

De Pomiane suggests slicing small courgettes lengthways into 50mm batons and dipping them in a light batter. I have eaten them like this in both Greece and Italy where this dish is served as an appetiser (like a super-fresh version of crisps).

The thinner the batter the crisper it will be, although you’ll inevitably lose some as it disperses in the oil. Using a fine pastry or pasta flour (00 grade) also helps make the batter smooth and lump free. For the batter you’ll need 50g flour, a pinch of salt, one egg (separated, white reserved), one tablespoon olive oil, 150ml lager (you can substitute milk and water mixed half and half).

Whisk the flour and salt together with the egg yolk and oil then whisk in the lager gradually to avoid lumps. Leave this mixture to rest for at least ten minutes, then whisk the egg white until stiff and gently fold it into the batter just before you are ready to start frying. Heat a little olive oil in a frying pan, dip the courgette batons into the batter (allowing a little to drip off) then pop into the pan and

fry for three minutes on one side and two on the other. Sprinkle with sea salt (and a squeeze of lemon in you like). Ideally, use the batter straightaway although it will keep for a day in the fridge, it just won’t be quite as light. This batter can also be used to fry courgette flowers.

Another way to eat courgettes is fried with *gremolata*. This Italian condiment is made of garlic, parsley and lemon zest. Usually sprinkled over *ossobuco alla milanese* (braised veal shanks), it goes well with vegetables of many kinds. Chop and finely mince one clove of garlic, finely chop a small bunch (about 6tbsp) of parsley, then combine with the zest of one lemon. Reserve, and then cut small courgettes into 2.5cm slices and gently fry in olive oil until soft and golden (about 15 minutes). Add the *gremolata* briefly to the pan (this 30-second sizzle helps the oil on the courgettes and the *gremolata* infuse). Season and serve immediately.

Broad beans have a wonderful affinity with the herb summer savory, which when grown as a companion plant helps repel blackfly. But this highly aromatic, slightly piquant herb is also an extremely good flavouring for all beans. Stir a teaspoon of finely chopped summer savory into a lemon and oil vinaigrette and then serve alongside broad beans, barely boiled in their pods then slipped out of their skins before serving. □

USEFUL COOKERY TECHNIQUE

No. 6 Elderflower vinegar

Shake the flowers of several heads to get rid of pollen and small insects, dry in the sun for a day then break up and push the flower sprigs into a bottle of white wine or cider vinegar. After three weeks, strain and rebottle. Wonderful with cold fish.

RECIPES

Romanian strawberry jam

Soft fruits have such a short season that it seems almost imperative to preserve some of them as jam and so prolong the pleasure. One of the joys of growing a wide variety of fruits is the chance to combine them in your own idiosyncratic conserves. In a book of farmhouse cookery I came across lots

of Victorian suggestions for combined fruit jams, such as rhubarb and blackcurrant, cherry and gooseberry, greengage and red gooseberry, and the rather intriguingly named Romanian strawberry jam, which combines strawberries with redcurrant or gooseberry juice. If you have ever tried to make strawberry jam you will know

that it is hard to get a good set as strawberries are low in pectin, so combining them with the sour, higher pectin juices of redcurrants is an excellent solution. **900g strawberries** (firm smallish, cut bigger ones in half), **800g sugar, 300ml redcurrant juice** (rub the redcurrants through a fine sieve). Simmer the strawberries gently,

when hot add the sugar and the juice. Stir over a low heat. When the sugar has dissolved, bring the heat up and boil rapidly (rapid boiling means less wastage and brighter colour), until the setting point is reached [issue 215, page 26], use a jug to pour into hot, sterilised jars and seal with circles of waxed paper and screw-on lids.



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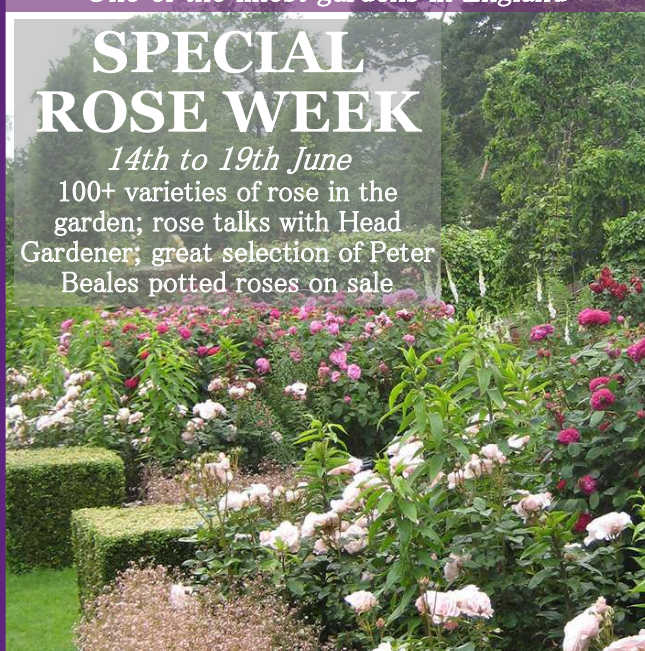
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Abi and Tom Attwood

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PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

What is your earliest gardening memory? **Abi** Digging up plants from my parents' garden aged seven and then trying to sell them back to them. **Tom** Growing weeds (rather unsuccessfully) in pots of garden soil at the age of eight.

Who has inspired your career the most? **Abi** Rob and Rosy Hardy of Hardy's Cottage Garden Plants. I met them both when I was 15 years old and they invited me to spend two weeks at their nursery. Those two weeks made my mind up that running a nursery was what I wanted to do for a living. **Tom** Tim Smitt, who wrote back to me when I was 13 and the Lost Gardens of Heligan were in their infancy. The project really fired my imagination.

Who are your horticultural heroes? **Tom** Piet Oudolf for his bold, exciting, innovative approach to planting, but also for his deep understanding and respect for the plants he grows, breeds and exchanges with fellow nurserymen and designers.

Three most worthwhile tips. **Abi** Experiment; get stuck in; use the knowledge of the wonderful independent nurseries we have in the UK.

Favourite planting style. **Abi** I very much like natural and relaxed

herbaceous plantings. **Tom** For me it's prairie-style planting.

The hardest garden-related thing you've ever had to do

Abi and Tom Resurrecting the nursery and garden here at Halecat. We spent two years grappling with 20 years of neglect, dilapidated growing structures and a defunct plant collection.

What principles have guided your approach to gardening?

Abi Don't be afraid of gardening, learn by trial and error.

Tom Keep pushing your comfort zone and don't allow yourself to be constrained by convention.

What heartens you about our attitudes to horticulture today?

Tom I think gardeners now have a greater awareness of their impact on wildlife, whatever the scale of garden, and are actively pursuing plants that are great for pollinators and choosing not to use pesticides.

Most embarrassing gardening moment **Tom** During a packed garden festival demonstration I genuinely forgot the common name of *Myosotis* – aka forget-me-not! □

Contact Abi and Tom's Garden Plants, Halecat, Witherslack, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria LA11 6RT. halecatplants.co.uk

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In brief

Name Malverleys.

What Recently developed garden of many rooms, planted in the style of William Robinson.

Where Hampshire.

Size Constantly expanding, currently about ten acres.

Soil Retentive clay.

Climate Fairly cold winters, mild summers and rather wet.

Hardiness rating USDA 8.

Flowering ahead

With its colourful drifts of dreamy planting and numerous garden rooms, Malverleys in Hampshire is a garden to explore with wonder – and is all the more remarkable since it is only five years old

WORDS RORY DUSOIR PHOTOGRAPHS ANNAÏCK GUITTENY



The terrace border is lavishly planted. The ebullience spills over as self-seeders make themselves at home among the paving slabs and setts.



“I was keen to take more responsibility and luckily with each success in implementing the owners’ vision there followed more challenges”

*M*alverleys, a 19th-century manor set on a hill rolling southwest down towards Newbury, is lost in a curious tangle of county borders and combes within a triangle described by Hungerford, Newbury and Andover. You need good directions to find it as mobile phones don’t tend to work within three miles. The current owners moved in five years ago and promptly appointed Mat Reese (formerly of Ness Botanic Gardens, Kew and Great Dixter) as their head gardener. There was an established garden and although Mat’s remit from the beginning was to develop it, both he and his employers would have been surprised at the speed and extent of the changes if they had known what the next five years would bring.

On several visits there I have found Mat up to his shins in mud directing a telehandler, unburdening an articulated truck of mature trees from Italy, or distributing bespoke pieces of York stone. There have been trips to collect an eclectic range of statuary, heavy plant breakdown

To continue turn to page 40 ►





The chicken house, mounted on staddle stones, is surrounded by a topiary meadow reminiscent of that at Great Dixter in East Sussex. Mat experiments constantly with the composition of the meadow.

4 combinations

Wedding ring border

This border, so-called because Mat once lost his wedding ring here, mixes purples, blues and pinks. *Cynoglossum amabile* (1) is grown as an annual or biennial, and although known as the Chinese forget-me-not for its colour and family ties, it is summer flowering and 1m tall. *Dierama 'Puck'* (2) is one of the more stocky dieramas, but graceful nonetheless, and the best grower of its tribe, according to Mat. The vivid, dark colour of *Salvia nemorosa 'Carradonna'* (3) is enhanced by the calyces surrounding the petals and is the tallest salvia of its type with a long flowering season. *Hordeum jubatum 'Early Pink'* (4) is an annual, prolifically self-sowing grass. Its progeny has to be culled every year, but this is no great hardship because the roots are insubstantial.

House border

This predominantly green border near the house is dominated by *Euphorbia cornigera* (1) and its self-sown progeny. *Verbascum lychnitis* (2), the self-seeding male fern *Dryopteris filix-mas* (3) and *Veronicastrum virginicum 'Fascination'* (4) lend their steeple shapes to this otherwise largely dome-shaped collection of plants. Other self-seeders here include the white *Lychnis coronaria 'Alba'* (5) and *Geranium psilostemon* (6). Behind sits *Lupinus arboreus 'Barton-on-Sea'* (7), which is a blue-white form of the shrubby, lax-growing tree lupin. The skill in this style of gardening is in distinguishing seedlings at an early stage and knowing when to give them their head.

The white garden

In the absence of colour, plant form assumes an ever greater importance. The frothy, flat heads of *Ammi majus* (1) contrast with the spires of the biennial *Salvia sclarea 'Vatican White'* (2) and, in the background, the giant silver thistle *Onopordum acanthium* (3), which both hold sway in June and July. Filling in the gaps in the foreground is the long-flowering *Clarkia pulchella 'Snowflake'* (4), while in the background is *Erigeron annuus* (5), whose seedlings must be thinned out, especially as the season progresses. It flowers constantly from June to November, but towards the end of the year starts to assume almost shrub-like proportions.

The hot garden

The importance of foliage in bold colour schemes, such as this, cannot be overstated – plenty of green and silver help us to digest all the strong colour. *Acer negundo 'Kelly's Gold'* (1) and *Verbascum gnaphalodes* (2), with its silvery leaves and soft yellow flowers, help to cool things down a bit, while the pewter of the plume poppy *Macleaya cordata* (3) and the golden leaves of *Fuchsia 'Genii'* (4) leaven the hot colours of *Kniphofia 'Fiery Fred'* (5), *Centranthus ruber* (6) and the tall, intensely scarlet *Papaver glaucum* (7), the tulip poppy, which set the tone for this border with its vibrant clash of hot colours.





House border



The hot garden

“The great thing about gardening in separate rooms is that you can create totally different effects in each and cater for different tastes”

▷ dramas, endless miles driven to source masonry, and many visits to other gardens for inspiration. Developments include a breathtaking new terrace border near the house, a woodland walk, hot and cool gardens, an exotic garden and a stunning new water feature (in an as yet unnamed and not quite finished garden room). The garden is productive too, with a large kitchen garden surrounding impressive, ornate fruit cages, and a large chicken house surrounded by meadow grass and topiary.

I ask Mat how the garden unfolded. Was the remit so broad, the owner’s ambition so extensive from the beginning? “Things just developed – I was keen to take more responsibility and luckily with each success in implementing the owners’ vision there followed more challenges. Importantly, we visited gardens together and discussed them so that I could understand my employers’ taste in plants and how to use them.”

A key moment was a visit to Great Dixter, where Mat had worked under Christopher Lloyd and Fergus Garrett as assistant head gardener. The Dixter influence at Malverleys is quite plain to see – a visit there in June or July will bowl you over with the abundance and unfurling multiplicity of the planting, but there are important points of difference. Christopher Lloyd was famously averse to colour-themed gardens and yet at Malverleys there are hot, cool and white gardens, at the behest of the owners. “The great thing about gardening in separate rooms is that you can create totally different effects in each and cater for different seasons and tastes,” says Mat.

But what both gardens have in common, and what they owe to the ‘father of the English flower garden’, William Robinson (1838-1935), far outweighs their differences in approach to colour. Both gardens are worked intensively by a highly skilled team in order to appear as effortless as possible. There is a great degree of succession planting, including a ▷



Poppies proliferate in the hot garden among the spires of red-hot pokers and verbascums. Here, the dark forms of *Papaver somniferum*, *P. hybridum* and *P. glaucum* mingle with the brilliant magenta of *Silene armeria* 'Electra'.



Mat Reese's top tips

- **Dividing a garden into separate rooms** allows you to work on a more intimate scale and permits contrasting colour themes, styles and seasons within one site. Colour combinations are subject to so many subtle factors – including light quality and the tone and saturation of the colours involved – that you always need to experiment and learn from your mistakes.
- **Spend time getting to know the site** before making any irreversible decisions about your treatment of a space.
- **A house should be linked to its garden** and the garden to the landscape beyond. If your house is in the country,

the Robinsonian-style of planting can provide great echoes of wild-plant communities.

- **Consider contrast** and when devising plant combinations contrast form as well as colour. It is also worth considering how plants move and set off the more mobile against the static.
- **The new chicken house was mounted** on saddle stones to stop vermin from nesting beneath it.
- **Some of the best planting effects** are quite fleeting and require assiduous editing to maintain. For example, the welcome haze of bronze fennel seedlings in spring will soon become overbearing if not culled as summer progresses.

- **Exercise restraint with water features.** Less is more – too much noise and movement can be agitating, rather than restful.
- **Don't be afraid to diverge** from perfectly square shapes when laying out your garden, if the topography suggests it. Slightly irregular gardens may look odd when drawn on a plan, but you experience gardens from ground level where irregularities are less noticeable.
- **Mat much prefers the effect of reclaimed York stone paving** when it is butt-jointed rather than pointed with mortar. "Each slab is defined by the shadow around its edge, and the drainage is much better," he says.

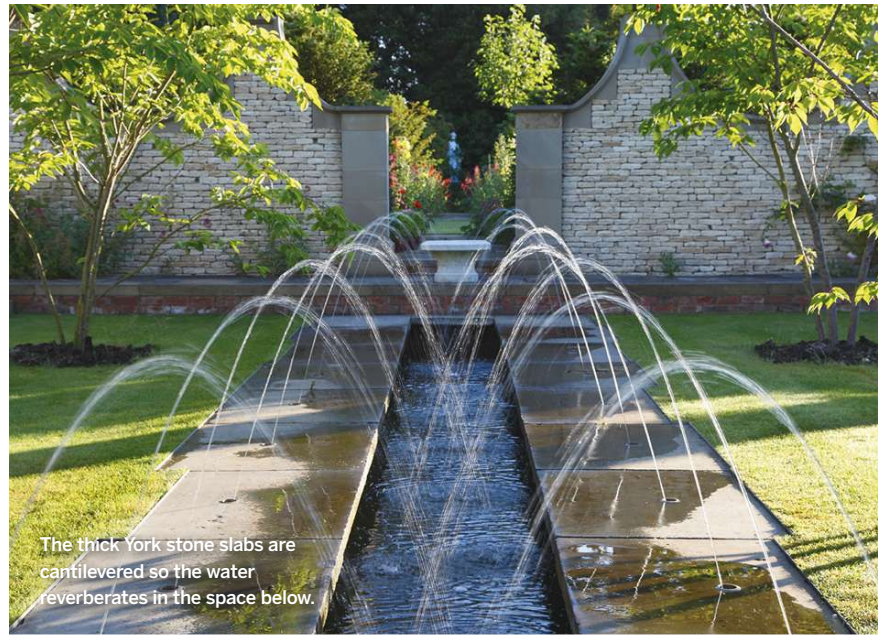
“For this style there is always a tension between structure and chaos and it’s important to get the balance just right”

▷ skilful and subtle use of bedding out to extend the seasons. Self-sowing plants are embraced and judiciously edited when necessary. The overall aim is to create something in the spirit of the tapestry of shapes and colours to be found in wild or semi-wild plant colonies such as meadows.

Key to the style, however, is structure and definition. When so much of the planting consists of a hazy and apparently random matrix of plants, anchor plants and clearly defined borders assume great importance. As if to illustrate this point, Mat shows off the improvement he is undertaking in the topiary meadow. “We decided to plant a hedge (*Euonymus alatus* ‘Compactus’) to define the edge where the meadow meets the path – for this style there is always a tension between structure and chaos and it’s important to get the balance just right.”

I ask if the garden has expanded organically, or according to a plan. “A bit of both,” Mat replies. “We did create a master plan, and the process was important because it allowed us to think about the site and what we wanted from it. It’s so important to get to know the terrain before you do anything irreversible. However, as the garden has expanded we haven’t always stuck rigidly to the original scheme.”

Mat has responded to the owners’ vision by planting dozens of semi-mature trees and shrubs, and many yards of yew hedging, to create a garden that appears astonishingly mature after just five years. “We have planted big to create our framework, but planting only large trees does restrict your choice,” says Mat. He gestures to a recently planted sapling of the unusual *Carpinus fangiana*. “As the garden matures further an increasingly distinguished collection of plants should come to the fore.” Exciting years lie ahead for this garden; let’s hope there are more opportunities to share its development with a wider public. □



The thick York stone slabs are cantilevered so the water reverberates in the space below.



Two fruit cages, large enough to house a cherry tree, form a focal point in the vegetable garden.



The statue of a water nymph presides over the pond garden at the end of one of the main axes.





Catmint spills over on to reclaimed bricks, used without pointing, to give a relaxed feel to this newly created garden room.

Falling for a view

Chris and Robin Hutt were drawn to their East Sussex house by its stunning views over the Sussex Weald, but the garden's steeply sloping site brought a frustrating set of problems

WORDS STEPHANIE DONALDSON
PHOTOGRAPHS MARIANNE MAJERUS

The garden at Fairlight End is perched on a ridge close to where the undulating Sussex Weald begins its steep descent to the sea. The 18th-century house is at the highest point in the garden with views down the slope over abundant borders and velvety lawns that are punctuated by clusters of specimen trees and shrubs. Beyond and below are the wild-flower meadows and the ponds with a backdrop of the gloriously unspoilt Wealden landscape.

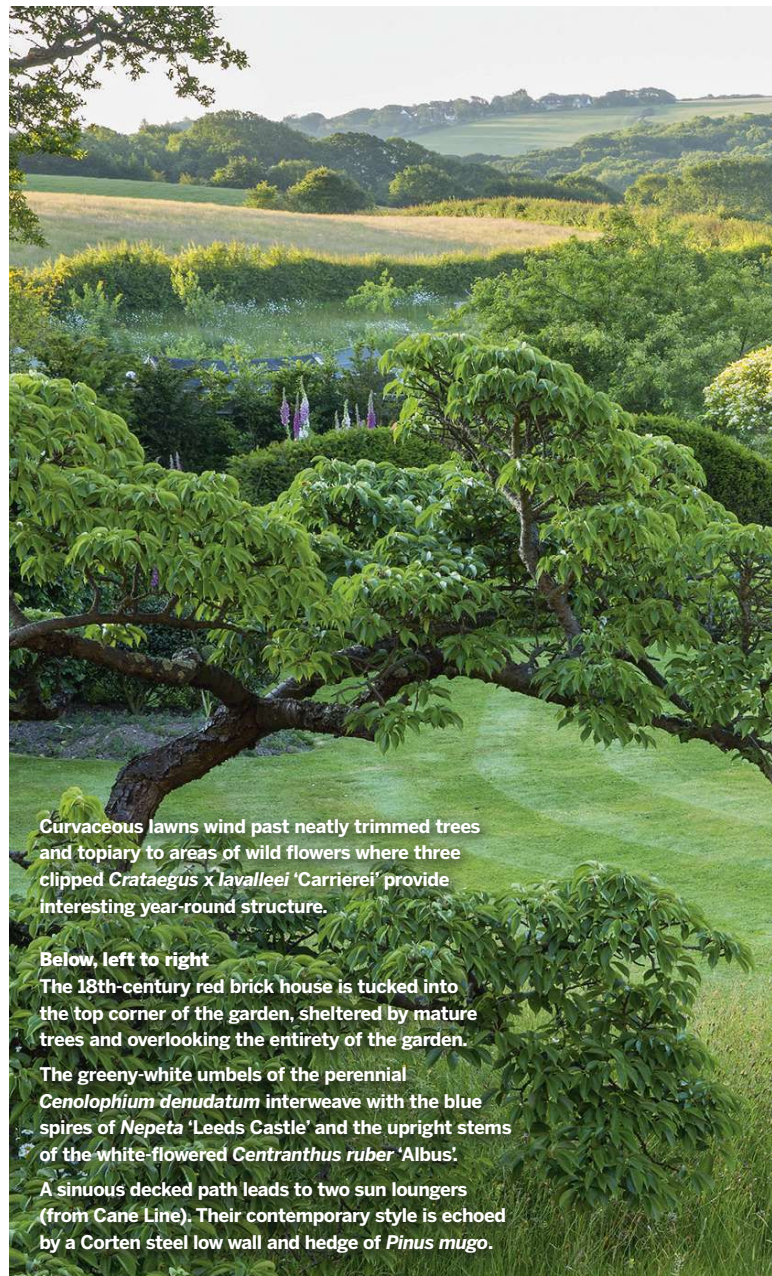
Eleven years ago, when owner Chris Hutt was 57, and semi-retiring from business life, he and his wife Robin moved here from Cambridge. "We had always lived in the city and never had more than a postage stamp-sized garden," says Chris. "I knew that one of the things I wanted to do with the extra time I had was to make a garden on a decent scale and to do that we had to move."

When the Hutt's first saw Fairlight End, the garden was an entirely different shape and a third of the upper garden didn't exist. "It is a very odd piece of land," explains Chris. "The fall from the road to the bottom of our three acres is fifty foot from one side of the property to the other. Every single part of the



Coping with a sloping garden

- **Expert advice will prevent costly mistakes.** Chris soon realised that the initial landscaping he'd done himself was unsatisfactory because he didn't understand proportions and principles. He now wishes he'd collaborated with landscape architect Ian Kitson from the start.
- **Earthworks can be costly and are messy,** but they are the only way to create generous planting areas on a steep slope, especially where the ground slopes in all directions as it does at Fairlight End.
- **Use sympathetic landscaping materials;** the Corten steel is contemporary, but its colour echoes the brickwork of the house.
- **Paths should slope gently** so they're still usable in wet or wintry conditions; steps are essential where a slope is too steep for paths.
- **Slopes tend to be windy,** so select only plants that will stand up and look good in the wind.
- **A slope or steps gives you the opportunity** to place plants differently. Some plants, such as *Stipa gigantea* and hellebores in spring, look particularly good when approached from below.



Curvaceous lawns wind past neatly trimmed trees and topiary to areas of wild flowers where three clipped *Crataegus x lavallei* 'Carrierei' provide interesting year-round structure.

Below, left to right

The 18th-century red brick house is tucked into the top corner of the garden, sheltered by mature trees and overlooking the entirety of the garden.

The greeny-white umbels of the perennial *Cenolophium denudatum* interweave with the blue spires of *Nepeta* 'Leeds Castle' and the upright stems of the white-flowered *Centranthus ruber* 'Albus'.

A sinuous decked path leads to two sun loungers (from Cane Line). Their contemporary style is echoed by a Corten steel low wall and hedge of *Pinus mugo*.



In brief

Name Fairlight End.

What Country garden on a steep slope that becomes increasingly informal as it falls away from the house.

Where Close to the coast in East Sussex.

Size Three acres.

Soil Clay over sandstone, improved by the addition of copious quantities of mushroom compost and grit.

Climate Very mild but windswept by prevailing westerly winds.

Hardiness rating USDA 8a-9b.

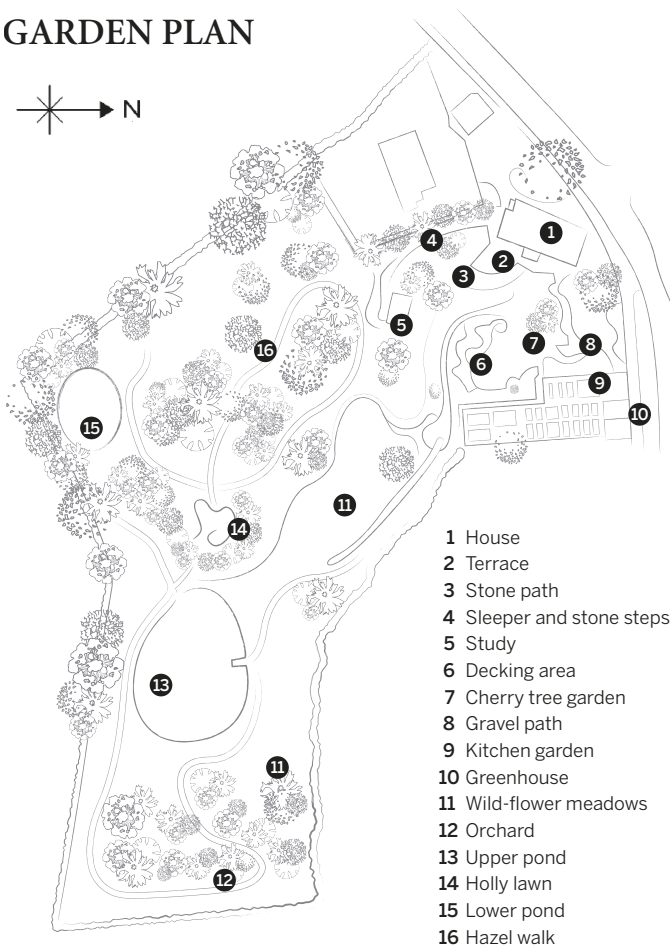


▷ garden slopes in various directions. In some ways it was a perverse purchase, yet I wouldn't have done it unless I saw and felt something about it as a piece of ground.

"I started very enthusiastically and energetically, and I made mistakes all over the place. If I pretended that I had the slightest idea about what I was doing I would be fibbing – I didn't have a clue." Rather than struggle on, Chris enlisted landscape designer Ian Kitson's help with a series of ongoing projects that have dramatically transformed an awkward site into a garden that flows down the hill in a series of distinct but subtly interrelated spaces. An equally important collaboration has been that between Chris and Tara Culley, a consultant on plant design who trained at the RHS and Great Dixter. "She designed the original herbaceous borders and has guided me through their evolution into plantings that are now primarily about shape and movement rather than colour. She has been in sympathy with what I have been doing every step of the way," says Chris "I couldn't have done any of it without her support." Equally important is William Hurton, another Dixter-trained gardener, who works alongside Chris for two days a week.

The establishment of the meadows was given a helping hand early on with some strewing hay from Great Dixter. Those areas are now botanically richer than anywhere else, although the introduced species are beginning to spread. "One of the nicest things I do all year," says Chris, "is sit in the meadow one lovely summer evening and collect seed into jars and envelopes to sow newly landscaped ▷

GARDEN PLAN



An ancient cherry tree is the centrepiece of the upper garden. On the other side of the path sculptural Corten steel shapes become plant supports when clothed in climbers later in the season.

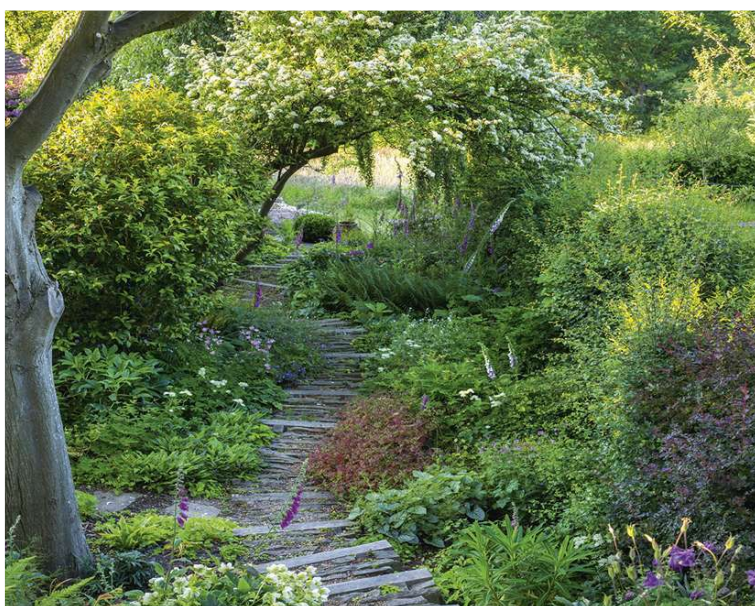
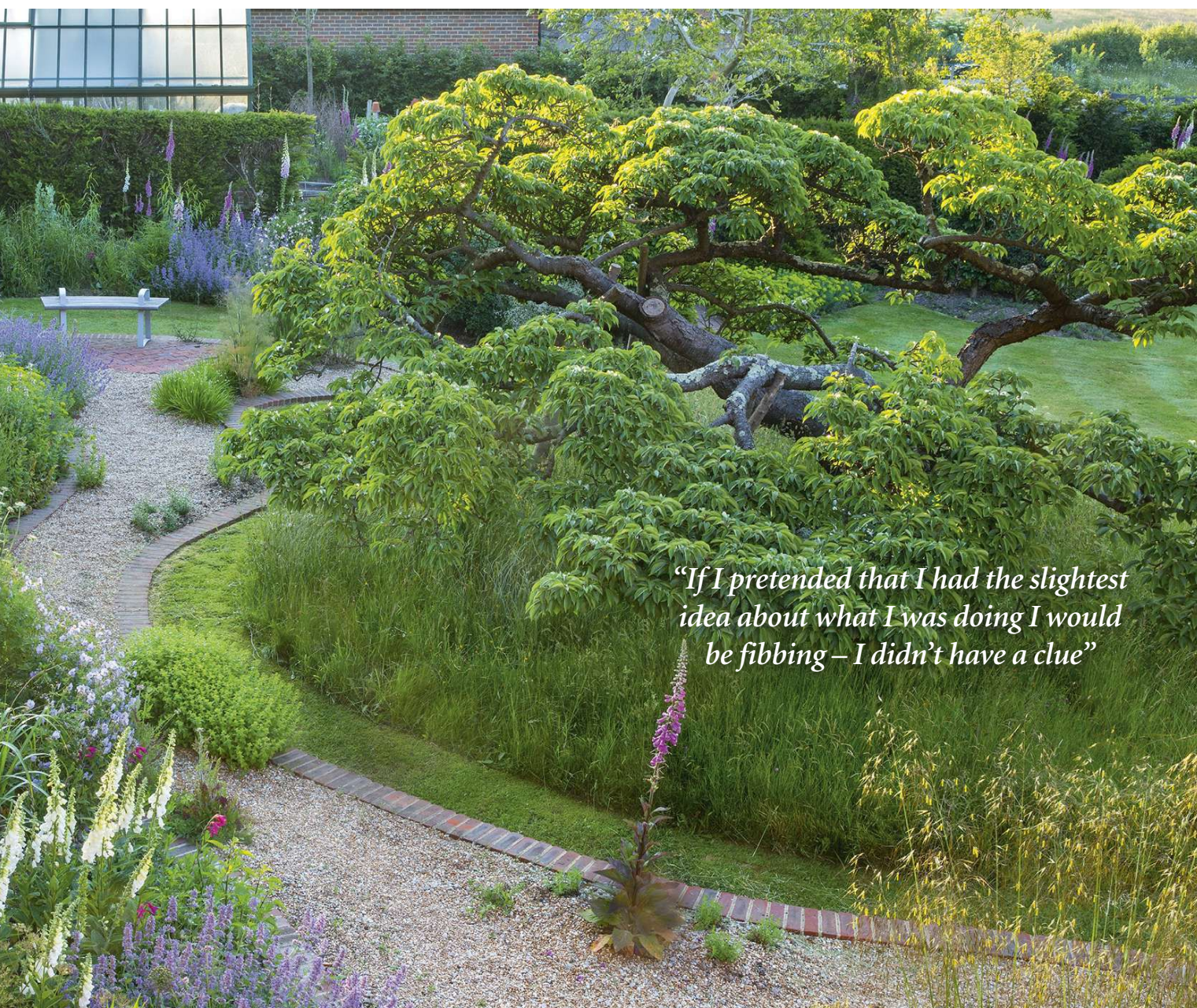
Below, left to right

Foxgloves line the path in the highly productive kitchen garden; its informality belies the orderly vegetable beds concealed behind the flowers.

Steeply sloping sleeper-and-stone steps overhung with pyracantha form a shady path that leads from the terrace in front of the house to Chris's study.

Rich pink *Rosa* Alan Titchmarsh (= 'Ausjive') and paler *R. Rosemoor* (= 'Austough') grow either side of a stone path against a backdrop of *Digitalis purpurea* and *Stipa gigantea* 'Gold Fontaine'.





▷ areas, or to give to other gardeners. The insect activity and the detailed variation of the flowers and the grasses is astonishing.”

As lovely as the meadows are, Chris is planning some changes. “I’m particularly pleased where we’ve introduced the white rugosa rose in the upper meadow. The wild flowers and grasses look wonderful for ten to 12 weeks a year, but those roses add another layer with flowers in summer and hips in autumn – I’m going to gradually plant more wild roses in the meadow.”

In the early days the garden was divided into three areas – kitchen, decorative and wild, but Chris has become progressively dissatisfied with that division and he and Ian have been blurring boundaries, starting with softening the edges between the decorative garden and the wild garden. At the same time Chris has lowered the yew hedges around the kitchen garden. “I want to be part of the bigger garden and the landscape when I work there on a summer evening,” he says. “We’ve also begun to grow food outside the kitchen garden, with rhubarb, fruit bushes and fruit trees advancing into the decorative garden – I see it as being a fourth subdivision of space.

“After those early years of making mistakes, I now have an idea of the thrust and direction of this garden. It is all about addressing the beautiful countryside beyond and allowing it to come into the garden and have the garden inter-react with the fabulous borrowed views. Each time we make it a little bit wilder, a little bit shaggier, a little bit looser and a little bit more unbuttoned I’m comfortable with the result – it’s where I want to go.” □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Fairlight End, Pett Road, Pett, Hastings, East Sussex TN35 4HB.

Tel 07774 863750. **Email** chrishutt@btopenworld.com

Open 25-26 June 2016, 11am-5pm, for NGS, and for groups of ten or more by prior arrangement from May to September. Guests staying at the Hutts’s holiday cottage, Infield, may also access the garden.

Ian Kitson Tel 020 7723 0043, iankitson.com

Tara Culley Tel 07855 494891, taraculley@icloud.com

Meadow making at Fairlight End

- **Chris attended a one-day Meadow Course** with Pam Lewis at Sticky Wicket (stickywicketgarden.com) in Dorset, where he bought a single packet of her yellow rattle seed. That single sowing has established a thriving population.
- **Chris considers yellow rattle** (*Rhinanthus minor*), used to weaken grasses in one area of meadow, as a ‘miracle plant’ because wherever it establishes, wild flowers spread and multiply.
- **In another area Chris stripped the topsoil**, which is more invasive but helps meadows establish more quickly. This area was sown with local Weald Native Origin Seed from the High Weald Landscape Trust (highwealdlandscapetrust.org). In the first year there was a fair amount of bare soil, less in year two, and now ox-eye daisies carpet the upper slopes of the meadow, thriving in the free-draining conditions.
- **As Friends of Great Dixter**, Chris and Robin were able to obtain strewing hay from Dixter’s long-established meadows to further increase plant diversity. This includes a healthy population of orchids.



When the upper pond was first dug, Chris and Tara planted its margins with 27 different native British plants – 900 plants in a single weekend – the only planting they’ve ever done in this area.

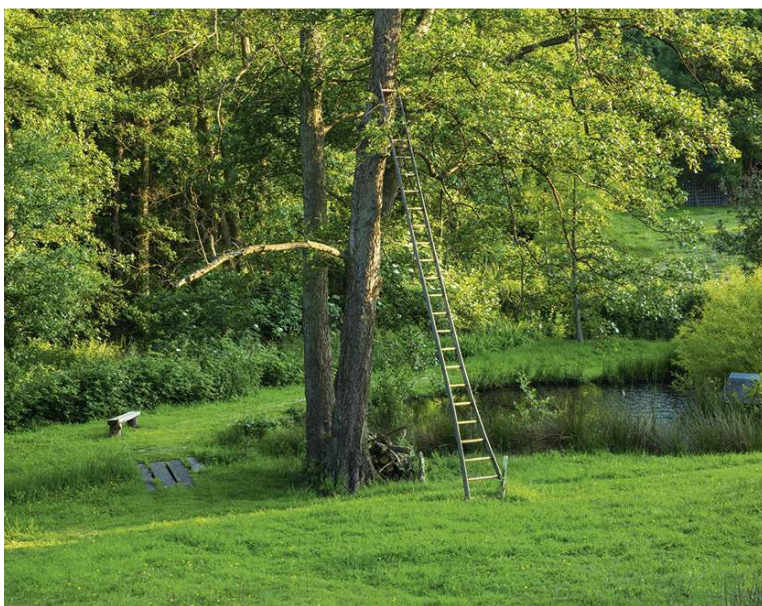
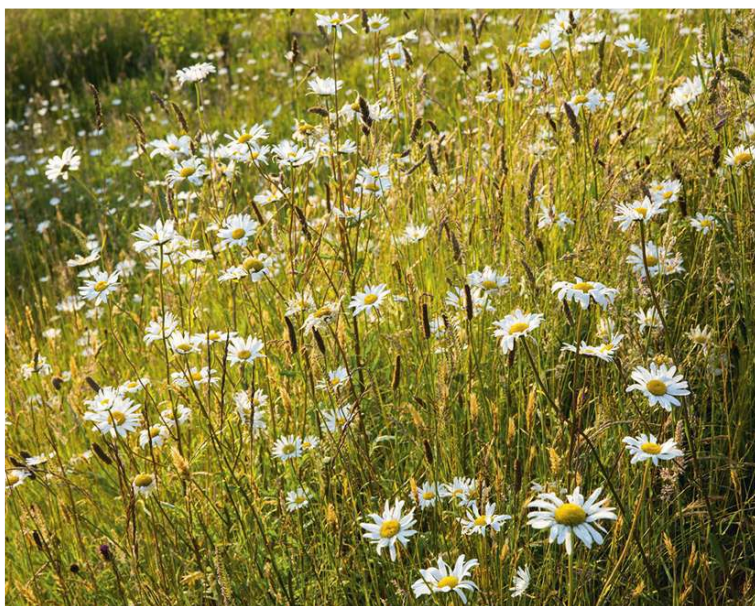
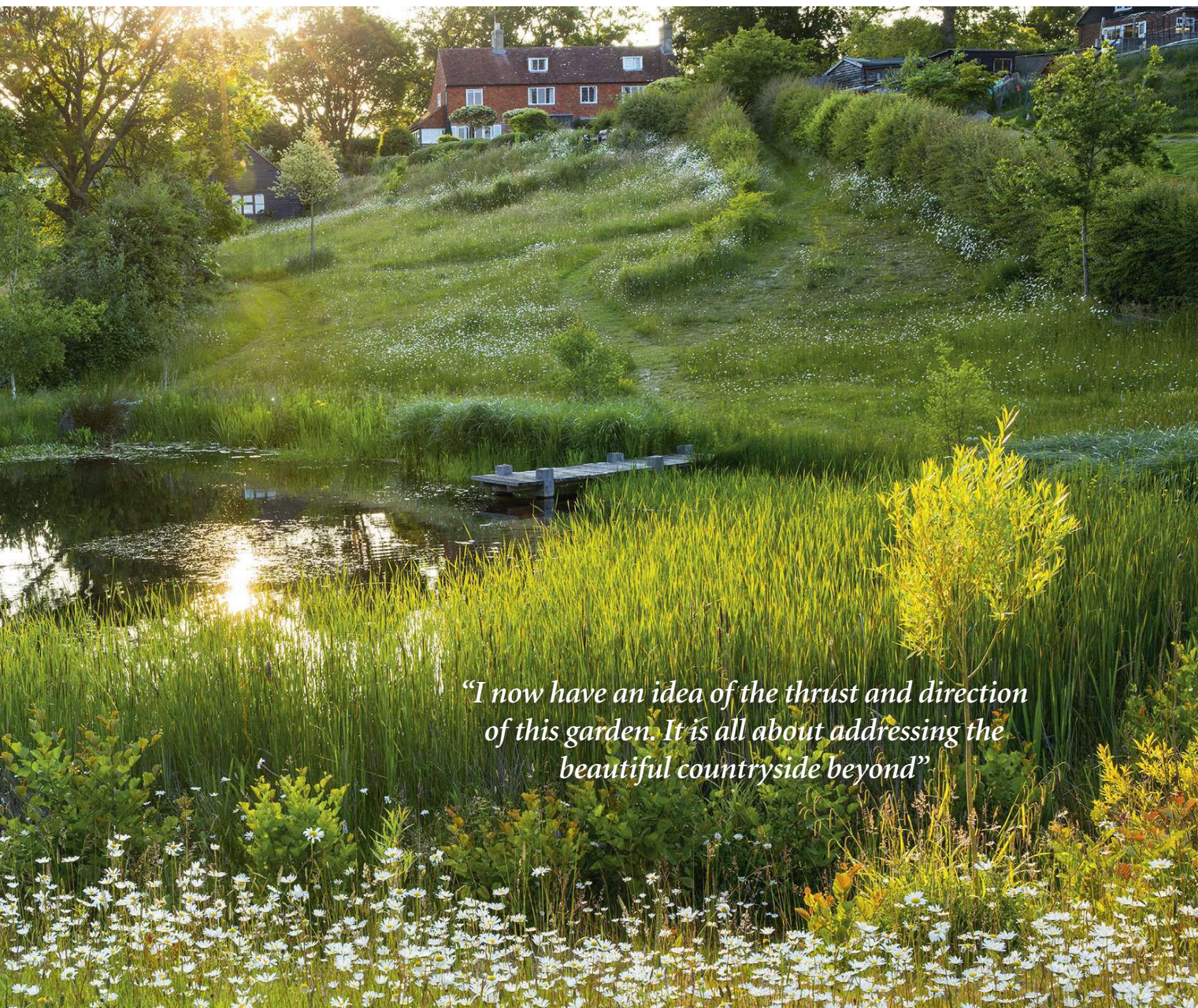
Below, left to right

Mown paths allow access to the wild-flower meadows and ponds and orchard beyond – the clearly defined routes prevent the meadows being trampled.

Stripping the topsoil from part of the meadow and introducing yellow rattle has created the perfect poor, dry conditions that allow ox-eye daisies to thrive.

This area, at the bottom of the slope, is lush and damper so wild flowers are slower to establish. The 6m ladder, leaning against an alder tree, was rescued from a Kentish cherry orchard.







This small posy of *Anemone coronaria*, *Exochorda x macrantha* 'The Bride', *Syringa meyeri* 'Palibin', combined with a sprig of rosemary, looks fabulous on a jacket, attached on the underside so the pinhead is invisible.



Oscar Wilde is said to have worn a buttonhole of fresh flowers every day at the height of his fame.



Tiny pin vases, such as these, hold water or moist tissue paper to keep stems fresh all day.

Bring back the buttonhole

When and why did wearing a buttonhole fall out of fashion? We think it's time to bring them back – after all it's what lapels were made for

WORDS AND STYLING CHARLIE RYRIE PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Chic and classic, frivolous or fantastic, it would be a joy to see buttonholes once again worn as daily accessories rather than just for weddings and occasional high days. You can simply pick a bloom from your garden – or vase, or hedgerow – or craft something extraordinary to show your personal style.

Men used to wear flowers far more commonly. In the late 18th century fashionable chaps in England – known as macaronis because of the pasta they ate on their European Grand Tours – wore entire bouquets in miniature. Less flashy gentlemen often wore sprays of flowers as the frock coat emerged as general wear, its turned-down collar forming a lapel with an exposed buttonhole, and as bright costumes became more sober, the buttonhole flower became fashionable as a splash of colour on a plain jacket. By the late 19th century a buttonhole was the mark of a careful dresser, worn by politicians and professionals as well as dandies. After the First World War, poppies emerged as a symbol of remembrance, and are still worn around Remembrance Day, but otherwise floral adornment was rarely

seen in the early 20th century. The fortunes of buttonholes revived a little in the 1950s, when film stars, such as Cary Grant, sported one. More recently, Agatha Christie's dapper detective Hercule Poirot, as portrayed by David Suchet on TV, was frequently seen with a flower on his lapel, often placed in a miniature vase for added elegance.

Even today, a well-made jacket often has a small loop on the underside of the lapel beneath the buttonhole to secure the stem, ideal for flowers, such as carnations or roses, with a large calyx, but even with jackets without a loop it's easy to stitch one, and equally fine to wear buttonhole flowers pinned flat on the outside of the lapel.

Most flowers can be made into tiny lapel posies – lily of the valley, scented pinks, cornflowers and nigella are all favourites of mine – and evergreen foliage, grasses and seedheads all last well, but this is an opportunity to use whatever you have to hand. If you bind stems with floral tape, then leave them in water overnight somewhere cool, they should comfortably last the day.

Turn the page for ten buttonhole combinations ►



10 buttonholes



1 The *Viburnum carlesii*, *Clematis montana* buds, *Euonymus fortunei* and rosemary in this combination are as lovely for their scent as their form. Split the viburnum flower head into small sections and put in water overnight. Combine with buds and leaves before taping together into your buttonhole arrangement.

2 Hellebores are like little botanical treasures and last for days. Here I've mixed them with *Akebia quinata* and *Euonymus fortunei* foliage. Steep all the elements in water overnight before binding together.

3 The small succulent *Sempervivum tectorum* mixes well with these *Mahonia japonica* berries, and both will last for days without drooping. The hyacinth pips are also long lasting but will need wiring.

4 Forget-me-not is always a great companion for tulips, as is this *Spiraea japonica* 'Goldflame' foliage. Secondary tulip flowers, such as this *Tulipa* 'Prinses Irene', are a perfect size for buttonholes. Freshly picked tulips sometimes open and close with sunlight during the day, adding an element of unexpected movement to your lapel.

5 *Argyranthemum frutescens*, *Centaurea montana* and *Euphorbia amygdaloides* var. *robbiae* combine well. Strip euphorbia flowers from the stem (beware the sap can be a skin irritant) and leave in water overnight for the perfect buttonhole.

6 The russet leaves of *Spiraea japonica* 'Goldflame' along with the delicate pink flowers of *Akebia quinata* work well with heavy-

Buttonholes continue over the page ►



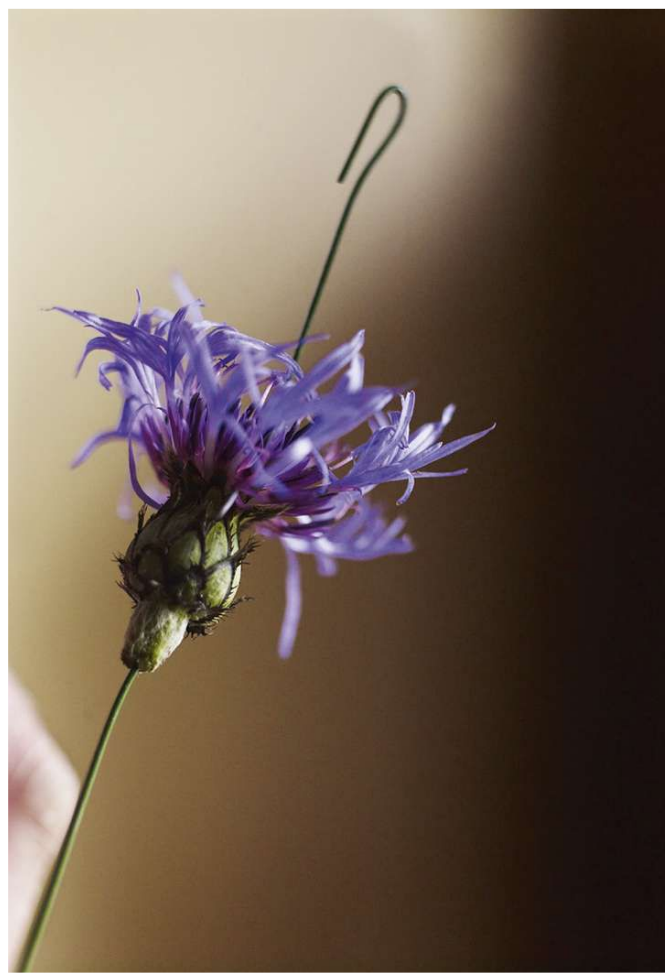
8



9



10



10 buttonholes (continued)

headed, round flowers, such as this richly coloured *Ranunculus*, which if left in water overnight before wiring the heads, will last for several days.

7 Here a lovely yellow *Ranunculus* 'Picotee' is combined with *Salix caprea* and *Salix purpurea* 'Nancy Saunders' to great effect. It's worth bearing in mind that all willows last well while at the catkin stage, however, the thin wiry stems of 'Nancy Saunders' are especially suited to a buttonhole.

8 Anemones make fabulous buttonholes and here the *Anemone coronaria* combines beautifully with the pretty speckled *Hellebore*. Larger flowers need wiring, so they don't droop, as will the *Astrantia major* and *Libertia chilensis* buds if they're to stay perky.

9 Bluebells make lovely buttonholes but very quickly droop. This *Scilla* seedling is a great alternative and works well with the blues of *Scabiosa caucasica* and *Pulmonaria* 'Blue Ensign', counterbalanced by the pinkish foliage of *Pittosporum tenuifolium* 'Tom Thumb' and the green of the rosemary. Sear the *Scilla* stems in just-boiled water for 20 seconds then leave in cold water for an hour before using.

10 Most clematis last well if left in water overnight, but try to avoid using the youngest foliage as it tends to wilt. This *Clematis montana* works well with the colours of the *Aquilegia* seedling, *Hellebore* and *Spiraea japonica* 'Anthony Waterer' foliage. To make sure they last, it's worth searing the stems of aquilegias briefly in just-boiled water.

How to make your buttonhole

If you want your buttonhole to stay perky throughout the day you will need to wire your flowers to prevent the heads drooping or snapping. To do this you'll need to thread wire through the flower's calyx, make a loop and pull the wire back so the head is secure. For best results leave the cut stems in water overnight then group your mix of flowers and foliage together. Bind your mix together with stem tape – wired flowers are easy to use as they can be moved into any position. Whether you leave the stems bare or cover with tape is down to personal preference, but florist's tape can help prevent flowers and foliage from drying out too fast. Florist's wire, stem tape, sturdy pins and decorative extras, such as ribbon and raffia, can be bought from many online suppliers, such as britanniadirect.org.uk or michaeldark.co.uk

Join the *Gardens Illustrated* campaign

When we recently spotted a dapper chap wearing flowers casually tucked into his lapel, we realised just how lovely a buttonhole can be. And what better way is there of enjoying the beauty of plants up close? We'd love to see more people wearing flowers, so we're starting our campaign to return the buttonhole posy to its rightful place on the nation's lapels. If you'd like to join us, and have been inspired by our buttonhole ideas, then we'd love you to take an image of yourself wearing your posy and post it via our social media channels using #BringBacktheButtonhole (see gardensillustrated.com for links), and we'll feature our favourites on the *Gardens Illustrated* website.

In brief

Name De Tuinerie.

What Romantic English-style garden with garden rooms and herbaceous borders.

Where Near Groningen, the Netherlands.

Size 1,400 square metres.

Soil Light, sandy soil, enriched with manure and compost over the years.

Climate Temperate maritime.

Hardiness rating USDA 8

A riot of colour

Designer Alie Stoffers has a passion both for plants and for finding the perfect hues to create exuberant borders – as her own garden demonstrates

WORDS INA SPERL PHOTOGRAPHS SIETSKÉ DE VRIES



Sometimes, on her garden open days, Alie Stoffers overhears visitors saying they must have “come at just the right time”. Truth is, it is nearly always the right time to visit Alie’s garden. Certainly from April to August, but Alie also ensures year-round interest by planting masses of bulbs for spring and choosing plants with good structure for winter. “Everyone has a nice garden in June,” says Alie. Well, maybe. But ‘nice’ is an understatement for this exceptional garden.

Her generously planted borders have exquisite colour schemes, from blues and pale yellows in front of the house, to pastels and reds. Alie is a genius when it comes to matching colours. “I have a colour memory,” she says. She spends time browsing plant catalogues, searching for perfect pairings. One of her combinations is *Silene dioica* ‘Firefly’ with the dahlias ‘Black Wizard’ and ‘Karma Naomi’.

Her 1,400 square-metre plot is a paradise for plant lovers and enthusiasts of English gardens alike. There is a herb garden near the kitchen, leading on to vibrant purple and hot borders, a woodland walk and a white garden with foxgloves growing in light shade. A romantic summer house stands on a small lawn, and at the far end of the garden is a small, colourful vegetable and fruit plot. Everything is held together by immaculate brickwork paths and neatly trimmed hedges of yew, ligustrum, hornbeam and *Pyrus salicifolia* ‘Pendula’. “No swaying grasses here,” says Alie, laughing. “I like classical elements. I can’t help it.”

When she and her husband Jan moved here 25 years ago there was nothing but farmland behind the house. Alie had a clear idea of what she wanted: an axis from her kitchen window stretching towards the open fields, with several garden rooms along it. Her design was inspired by Arley Hall in Cheshire and by Powis Castle and Bodnant Garden in north Wales. What is remarkable is that Alie created her garden before she ▷

Left Alie created this garden on very poor soil over 21 years. It has striking borders, such as the hot and purple borders. A hornbeam hedge separates this colourful garden room from her herb garden.



Alie felt she was missing something in her life. “Then I saw Geoff Hamilton presenting Gardeners’ World. It hit me. I knew instantly: I have to garden”

► ever visited Britain. “It probably had to do with what I saw on *Gardeners’ World*,” she says, recalling that watching the programme was a turning point in her life. Alie worked in a photo lab, but felt she was missing something in her life. “Then I saw Geoff Hamilton presenting *Gardeners’ World*. It hit me. I knew instantly: I have to garden.”

Alie started off happily with plants given by friends, family and neighbours, including a *Cornus* var. *kousa* ‘China Girl’ and a snowdrop tree (*Halesia carolina*), which surprised them with its white flowers in spring. These trees are still very much favourites. But Alie, who was pleased with “everything that flowered” in the beginning, has become more discerning. “You have to find three good reasons for a new plant. As well as its colour, it has to have a nice shape and grow well in your soil.”

Gardening is now Alie’s life. She has her own garden design studio, De Tuinerie, and admits to working 100 hours a week. Her parents and husband help to keep her own garden in shape. Not having children was her deliberate choice. “The garden is my life, my everything,” she says. Every three or four years, Alie digs up her borders. She adds manure, some new plants and plenty of

spring bulbs. In the hot border she has just introduced a new *Solidago x luteus* ‘Greenfinch’. In the purple border, there’s a beautiful *Campanula lactiflora* ‘Loddon Anna’. “Why not plant *Phlox x arendsii* ‘Utopia’ when you want soft pink in late summer?” she says.

Alie loves her plants but she’s not sentimental. When her box hedges were struck by box blight, she says, “It hurt me every time I saw them, so it was time to say farewell.” And she’s not one to be easily deterred. “I did everything to have *Alstroemeria aurea* ‘Orange King’ in my garden,” she says. It’s a bulb that is difficult to establish, but over 15 years her three plants multiplied to 3,000 – “far too many”.

Alie is planning to extend the garden to the south, with more garden rooms, a building for teaching in, and a perennial meadow. Unsurprisingly, she’s already designed it. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address De Tuinerie, Vrouwenlaan voor 12, 9615 TB Kolham, Groningen, the Netherlands.

Website de-tuinerie.nl

Open On selected days or by appointment.

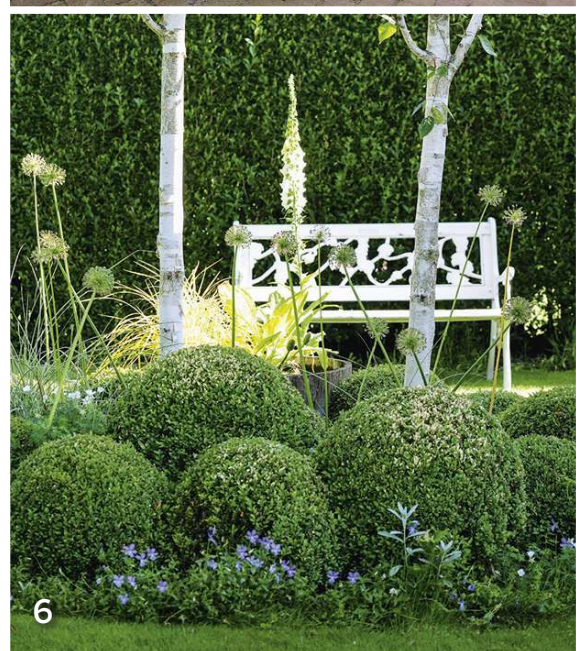
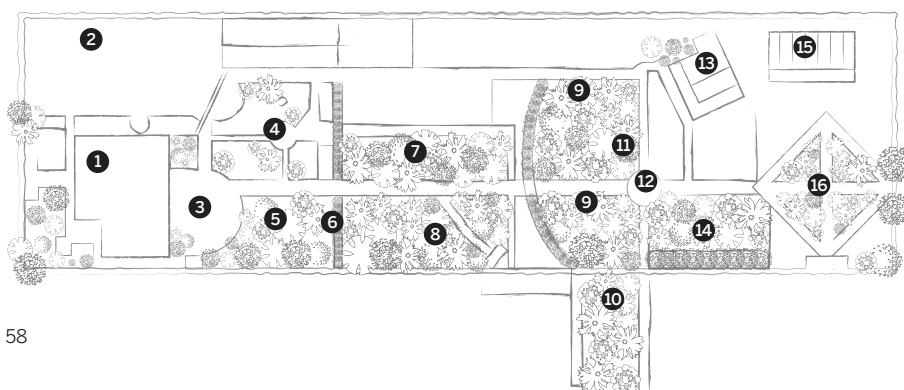
GARDEN PLAN

- 1 House
- 2 Driveway
- 3 Terrace
- 4 Herb garden

- 5 Crimson border
- 6 Hornbeam hedge
- 7 Hot border
- 8 Purple border

- 9 Woodland garden
- 10 Perennial meadow
- 11 White garden
- 12 Pond

- 13 Summer house
- 14 Pastel border
- 15 Greenhouse
- 16 Kitchen garden





1 Alie chose the same brick paving throughout the garden to prevent the paths drawing the eye away from the plants.

2 A beautiful rambler, *Rosa* 'Paul's Himalayan Musk' grows over an arch by the herb garden.

3 A large, well-trimmed virginia creeper is allowed to climb over the roof of Alie's house.

4 A lemon-coloured petunia looks at home in an old galvanised bucket, while *Rosa* 'New Dawn' grows above the archway.

5 To the right of the path, the hazy-blue catmint *Nepeta racemosa* 'Walker's Low' sets off the majenta *Geranium psilostemon* and pink *Geranium x oxonianum* 'Rodbylund'.

6 White foxglove spires echo the verticals of two young Himalayan birch trunks. *Viola* 'Belmont Blue' flowers in front of the clipped box.

7 Alie has trained two Dutch pears over an arch in the kitchen garden. The long-flowering, hardy *Geranium Rozanne* (= 'Gerwat') partially obscures the picket fence.

8 The summer house verandah is the perfect place from which to enjoy the white garden, especially at twilight.



5 Inspiring plant combinations

1 Lilac and magenta. In the purple border, *Salvia nemorosa* 'Amethyst' and *Geranium psilostemon* form a gorgeous, long-flowering combination. The salvia grows 1m tall and has spikes of soft-lilac flowers on dark purple stems, which look wonderful with the geranium's strong magenta flowers. This part of the garden room is a joy in summer, with *Rosa Rhapsody in Blue* (= 'Fantasia') and *Thalictrum* 'Splendide'.

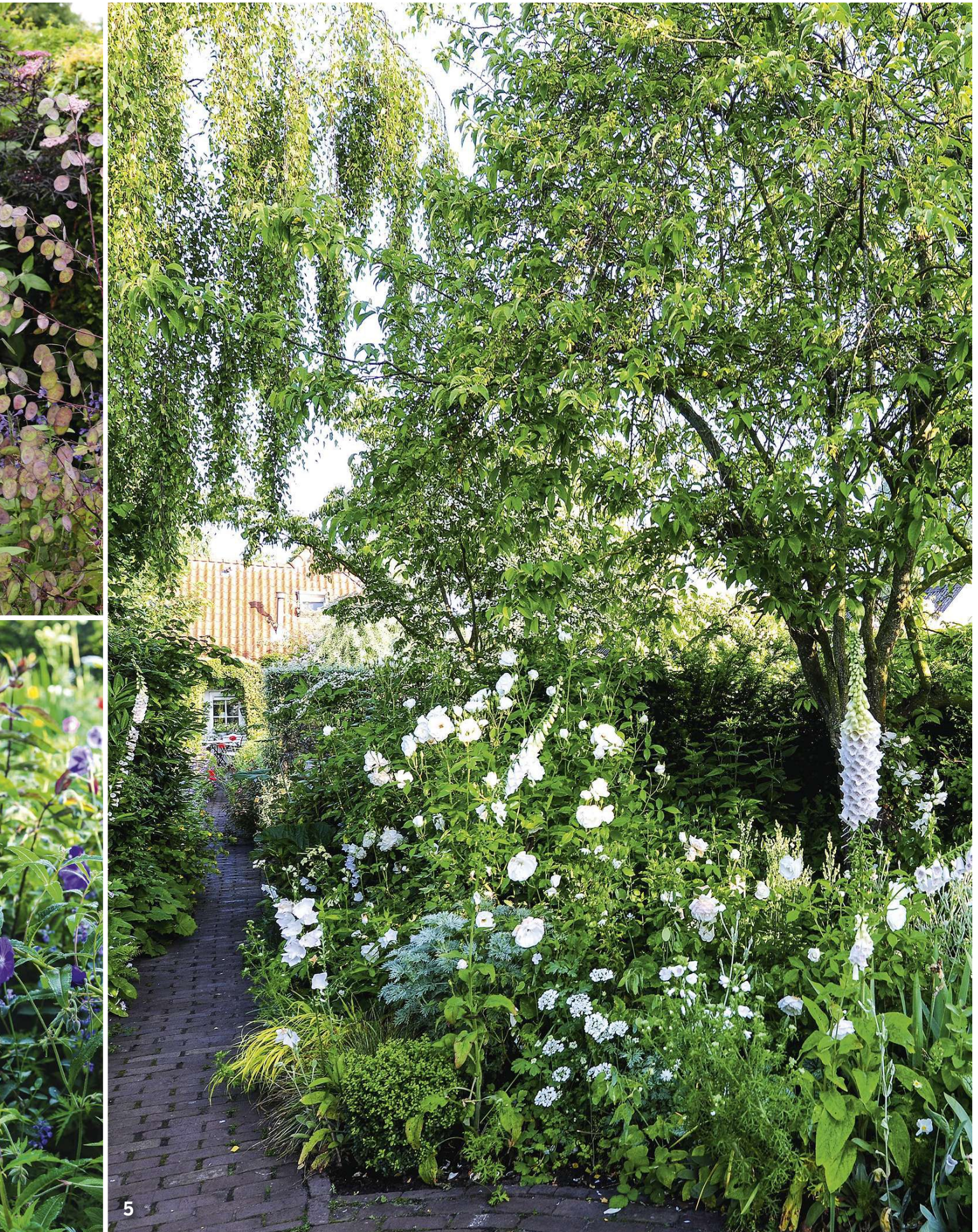
2 Mauve and purple. In the front of the purple border, the pale-lilac flowers of *Nepeta sibirica* shine against the dark leaves of *Sambucus nigra* f. *porphyrophylla* 'Eva'. This elder, with its delicate, light-pink flowers in summer, is a key plant here in all seasons and Alie selects colours to complement it: pink tulips in spring, then astrantia, lunaria and the feathery spires of *Pennisetum orientale* 'Karley Rose' through the summer.

3 Crimson and red. Alie has created some unusual combinations here in the crimson border, choosing plants that do well in partial shade. She's added some soft pink colours to freshen it up. *Lupinus* 'The Page' flowers among *Cosmos bipinnatus* 'Rubenza', the annual *Trifolium rubens* and *Dahlia* 'Karma Naomi'. One of her favourites is the annual *Lychnis coronaria* Gardeners' World (= 'Blych') because of its long flowering period and pretty grey foliage.

4 Indigo and pink. *Geranium* 'Orion' mingles with *Chamaenerion angustifolium* 'Stahl Rose', *Nepeta sibirica* and the red-tipped leaves of *Phlox paniculata* 'Blue Paradise'. The rosebay willowherb is spreading, but Alie likes it because of its light, soft pink flowers that appear to walk through the border. It can easily be pulled out where it is not wanted. It matches the rambler *Rosa* Mary Rose (= 'Ausmary').

5 White and green. Alie's white border is in dappled shade, thanks to the tall snowdrop tree. "A tree in the border is not ideal, but with the right plants, it is possible," she says. *Rosa* Iceberg (= 'Korbin'), white campion and the beautiful but short-lived annual *Orlaya grandiflora* all flower in abundance.







Natural talent

Artist Rebecca Louise Law makes ephemeral sculptures out of fresh and drying cut flowers

WORDS DIANA WOOLF PHOTOGRAPHS RACHEL WARNE



Rebecca creates intricate floral artworks for large-scale installations in private and public venues.

As well as its grandeur, Rebecca is also fascinated by the minutiae of nature and her sculptures are as much about the detail of individual flowers as their overall impact

R

ebbecca Louise Law makes eye-catching, ethereal sculptures using cascades of fresh and drying cut flowers. It's a technique she has invented herself, harnessing both her artistic and horticultural knowledge to create artworks with all the delicacy and breathtaking natural beauty of a wild-flower meadow.

Rebecca studied fine art at Newcastle University where she tried out various natural materials before accidentally discovering the potential of flowers. "My father is a gardener and I went home one weekend and took a load of his dahlias back to college to experiment with," she explains. Rebecca used the dahlias to create an installation exploring the processes of preservation and decay, and realised that she had found her perfect material. After graduating she decided to continue making floral artworks but felt she needed some practical experience. "I had to understand what I was working with before I could work as an artist." Consequently she spent four years as a florist before setting up on her own in 2008.

Rebecca's big break came in 2011 when she won her first major commission, *Hanging Garden*, a dramatic installation made for the Floral Hall at the Royal Opera House in London. It was such a success that Rebecca, now in her thirties, hasn't stopped since and in the past five years she has worked on installations for clients as far afield as Japan, Athens and New York. She also makes smaller sculptures encased in glass boxes and framed pieces using flowers recycled from her temporary installations. "We never throw anything away," she laughs.

The sculptures are made by tying flowers to lengths of copper wire. These are then manipulated into shape and suspended from the ceiling, allowing the flowers to dry naturally. Part of Rebecca's skill lies in knowing how individual flowers will age and she is constantly experimenting with different species. "It's what I like best – learning the whole journey of a species from beginning to end," she says.

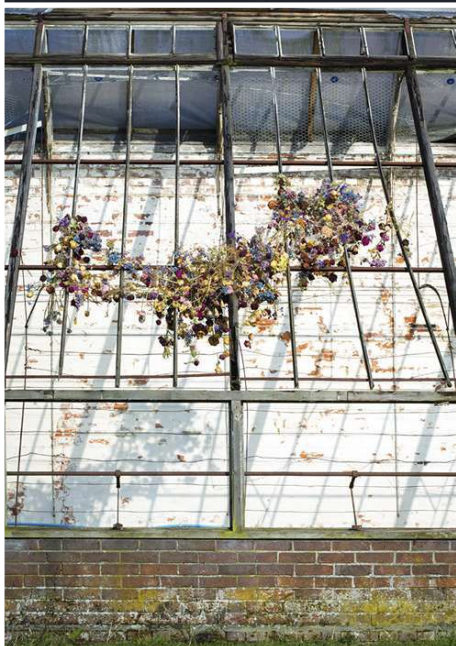
Visitors to the walled gardens at the Luton Hoo Estate in Bedfordshire this summer will get a chance to see one of Rebecca's installations. Although designed by 'Capability' Brown, Luton Hoo's gardens fell into disrepair in the 1980s, but are now being restored by volunteers. "It's somewhere that's really lost and beautiful and an incredible space – it was like a blank canvas for me," says Rebecca. She's used dried flowers collected over the past four years to create an installation called *The Dairy 2016*, a fragile, ghostly drift of plant forms that gently float above an old marble dairy slab.

Rebecca takes her inspiration from nature. "I want to capture a tiny part of the awe you get when you are completely surrounded by the landscape," she says. But as well as its grandeur, she's also fascinated by the minutiae of nature and her sculptures are as much about the detail of individual flowers as their overall impact. And this is why she prefers her sculptures to remain in situ for as long as possible, although it may seem perverse to make permanent sculptures out of such an ephemeral material. "The longer the installation is there, the more fascinating it becomes – the colour slowly disappears but the actual structure of the flower remains," she explains, adding, "Flowers can last forever – they are a really amazing material." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Rebecca's studio is open every Sunday 10am-4pm; artworks are available for sale and commission. See her website for details of upcoming exhibitions. Her piece *The Dairy 2016* can be viewed on guided tours of the Walled Gardens at Luton Hoo Estate in Bedfordshire (lutonhooestate.co.uk/walled-garden), every Wednesdays at 11am, 12.15pm and 2pm, from 4 May to 28 September.

Address 100 Columbia Road, London E2 7QB. **Tel** 020 7739 0575. **Website** rebeccalouiselaw.com





Wisteria

This quintessentially English climber has a reputation for being tricky to grow, however, provided it is assiduously pruned and trained, you will be amply rewarded

WORDS CHRIS LANE PHOTOGRAPHS ANNAÏCK GUITTENY

In brief

What Five species and two hybrid groups of vigorous, woody climbers with twining stems.

Origins Most are found in Japan, but wisteria are also native to China and the USA. The three most commonly grown species in the UK are *W. floribunda* (Japanese wisteria), *W. sinensis* (Chinese wisteria) and *W. brachybotrys* (silky wisteria).

Season Most flower April to June, but some can flower as late as July.

Size Wisteria are strong-growing plants that can reach up to 20m, although their eventual size will largely be determined by the allotted space. Wisterias can be kept to a height of 2m if grown on a post.

Conditions In the wild, wisteria are found in woodland areas with their roots in shade and leaves in the tree canopy in full sun. Although happiest in moist, well-drained soils, wisteria will grow in most soils.



Chris Lane is a nurseryman with an interest in plant propagation. He runs the wholesale Witch Hazel Nurseries in Kent and holds four National Plant Collections, including wisteria.

Wisterias are climbing plants par excellence. No matter how it is trained, a wisteria in full flower, with hundreds if not thousands of racemes, cannot fail to excite the beholder. Although the most common wisteria are blue-mauve there are also white, pink or purple forms, and while there are some forms of *Wisteria floribunda* that have only a slight scent, most are highly perfumed adding immensely to their desirability as a garden plant.

Wisteria climb by twining. Some species, such as *W. floribunda*, twine in a clockwise direction, while others, such as *W. sinensis* in an anti-clockwise direction. All have a compound pinnate leaf and the flowers, or more correctly inflorescences, are racemes, which vary in length and contain between 20 and 170 individual flowers, depending on species and cultivar.

The genus *Wisteria* was named in 1818 by Thomas Nuttall to describe *W. frutescens*. This species, which hails from the southern US Gulf states, is rarely seen in UK gardens as our climate is not warm enough for it to flourish. It breaks into growth fairly late, flowering in July on current season's growth, which does not ripen well for the following year and as a result gets cut back by winter frosts.

By far the most commonly seen species in the UK is the Chinese wisteria, *W. sinensis*, which was introduced to cultivation in 1816 and rapidly became popular. The original plant introduced was named *W. sinensis* 'Prolific' (see page 68), and it is still one of the best blue cultivars available, with a gorgeous scent. Other cultivars worth looking out for are the white-flowered *W. sinensis* 'Jako' (page 72), which has longer racemes and a very powerful scent, especially at dusk when its presence is quite ghostly, and the violet-mauve *W. sinensis* 'Amethyst' (page 68), one of the most highly scented cultivars.

A relatively unknown species from Japan, *W. brachybotrys*, or silky wisteria, deserves to be more widely grown. It has fairly short ▷

Wisteria is a vigorous climber that will quickly grow to cover a wall or side of a house, and it needs regular pruning to keep it in check. However, in full bloom, plants such as this *Wisteria floribunda* 'Royal Purple' (see page 69), look fabulous and are well worth the effort.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

▷ but broad racemes and the individual flowers are the largest in the genus. It also has a wonderful scent and comes in a range of colours, from the white *W. brachybotrys* 'Shiro-kapitan' (page 70), to the rich-purple of *W. brachybotrys* 'Okayama' (below) – one of my favourite wisterias of all.

A better-known Japanese species is *W. floribunda*, which in Japan can be seen in various forms adorning pergolas. In fact pergola cultivation in the UK was first practiced after westerners saw the wonderful pergolas in Japan adorned by ancient specimens, up to 1,000 years old.

Not all *W. floribunda* have long racemes but many have been selected for that trait, including the wonderful *W. floribunda* f. *multijuga* (page 70), considered by the Australian wisteria enthusiast Peter Valder to not only be one of the best wisterias available, but also one of the world's greatest garden plants. The distance between the pedicels on this exceptional wisteria is greater than for other cultivars, meaning that in the right conditions its racemes can grow to more than a metre in length. As the flowers of wisteria open from the top of the raceme sequentially to the tip, in *W. floribunda* f. *multijuga* the first flowers can be over before those at the tip have even opened, giving it a long flowering period.

W. floribunda has given rise to many more named selections than *W. sinensis* and *W. brachybotrys* combined and these are available in a wide range of flower colours and raceme sizes. Among my favourites are *W. floribunda* 'Alba' (page 70), a white-flowered cultivar and one of the last to flower; and the mauve-purple *W. floribunda* 'Royal Purple' (facing page).

There are also some notable hybrid groups worth considering, including *W. x formosa*, a hybrid between *W. floribunda* and *W. sinensis*; and *W. x valderi*, recently named by the botanist James Compton in honour of Peter Valder, a cross between *W. floribunda* and *W. brachybotrys*.

Whichever wisteria you choose, these vigorous climbers in full flower are a glorious sight to behold and provided you ensure they are grown in the right conditions – and are properly trained and pruned – your success in growing one is virtually guaranteed.

• Chris's recommendations for wisteria continue over the next six pages.



WISTERIA SINENSIS 'PROLIFIC'

This sweetly scented cultivar is the original *W. sinensis* introduced from China, and one of the best for growing on a wall. Its soft blue-violet racemes (16-22cm), contain around 50 to 80 flowers. AGM*. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b†.



W. BRACHYBOTRYS 'OKAYAMA'

A strongly scented and vigorous cultivar that deserves to be more widely grown. Its leaves are a rich, bronze colour when young, and its racemes (12-20cm) are mauve-purple, with a central white blotch. AGM. RHS H5.



W. SINENSIS 'AMETHYST'

A moderately vigorous cultivar from New Zealand. Its racemes, though relatively short (12-18cm), are strongly scented and reddish-violet. Leaves are bronze when young. AGM. RHS H5.



W. FLORIBUNDA 'YAE-KOKURYU'

Each flower of this distinctive cultivar has 20 petal-like elements, giving it a rich, dark appearance. Its long racemes (33-38cm) have dark violet tips and a faint scent. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b.



***W. FLORIBUNDA* 'ROYAL PURPLE'**

The darkest-flowered form currently available. Moderately vigorous and sweetly scented, its long racemes (27-40cm) hold more than 90 purple-violet flowers. AGM. RHS H5.



***W. BRACHYBOTRYS* 'SHIRO-KAPITAN'**

This vigorous plant, the earliest white-flowered cultivar to flower, looks good grown on a red brick wall. Its short (10-20cm) racemes hold 20-35 white flowers, each with a faint, yellow blotch. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.



W. FLORIBUNDA* f. *MULTIJUGA

Best displayed on a pergola, where its long (over 1m), pale-violet racemes can hang down free from any emerging foliage, this is one of the best wisterias available. Vigorous. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b.



***W. X FORMOSA* 'CAROLINE'**

When this moderately vigorous, mauve-blue hybrid was first introduced from New Zealand, it was sold as 'Amethyst' (see p 68), but is quite different, with longer racemes (17-21cm) and a faint scent.



HOWARD PRICE / GAP PHOTOS

***W. FLORIBUNDA* 'LAVENDER LACE'**

Sweetly scented, long racemes (42-54cm) with flowers that delicately blend pale and deeper violet colours, make this a good choice for pergolas. Young bronze foliage adds additional interest.



***W. FLORIBUNDA* 'ALBA'**

Also known as 'Shiro-noda', this vigorous cultivar is one of the last to flower. Lovely white flowers with a small yellow blotch and a faint scent. Racemes are relatively long (36-48cm). AGM. RHS H5.



***W. FLORIBUNDA* MACROBOTRYS GROUP 'BURFORD'**

An excellent cultivar that may belong in the new *W. x valderi* group. Named from a plant growing on the wall of Burford House, Tenbury Wells. It grows well up a tree. AGM. RHS H5.



W. X VALDERI 'ERANTHEMA'

A good bluish-mauve hybrid with long (35-45cm), broad racemes offering a wonderful show. Young shoots are brown in colour, a trait inherited from its *W. brachybotrys* parent.



W. X FORMOSA 'ENCHANTMENT'

This lovely hybrid, raised by Audrey Menzies in Australia, is very floriferous, and not too vigorous. With moderately long (17-21cm), bluish-mauve racemes, it's a good form for all types of training.



W. FLORIBUNDA 'LAWRENCE'

This vigorous cultivar, which was selected in Canada, is one of my favourites. It has long (36-50cm), densely packed, blue-mauve racemes and a glorious sweet scent. AGM. RHS H5.



W. FLORIBUNDA MACROBOTRYS GROUP 'HOCKER EDGE'

A cultivar in the same group as 'Burford' (facing page) and just as attractive. Very vigorous, with long (42-60cm), mauve-violet racemes and a moderate scent.

Training

Although wisteria is often seen trained along wires on a house or a wall, it can also be extremely effective grown up pergola supports or archways – especially in the case of wisterias with long racemes that are best admired without branches or foliage getting in the way – or as a standard wisteria tree up a post. But no matter how you train your wisteria, the importance of initial training can't be stressed strongly enough:

- Wisteria are long-lived and will form thick woody stems that will require a sturdy main support. However, only one shoot should be trained up and along this main support.
- If you're growing against a wall, use strong metal wires (3mm galvanised steel) set at least 45cm apart.
- Check growth throughout the growing season, and again in autumn when the growing season has ended. Where shoots have turned round the wires or posts they should be untwined and tied back to the wire using thin plastic tubing material.
- If two or more main shoots turn round each other, stronger shoots will eventually strangle the weakest, and if shoots are not untwined from the wires it will mean the wire will be part of the main stem when the shoot thickens.
- You can also grow wisteria up a tree, which is a much simpler process. Plant the wisteria some distance from the tree, near the outside branches, and tie jute fillis twine from the plant to the branch. Once the shoot has reached the branches it will then soon make its way into the tree and the fillis twine will rot away.

Pruning

Many people find the idea of pruning wisteria daunting but it's not as tricky as it might seem. Pruning is essential for wisteria, not only to keep the plant's growth in check but also to improve the chance of flower buds forming. Received wisdom is that wisteria

should be pruned twice a year, once in summer (July or August) and again in winter (January/February). However, plenty of side shoots will arise from the main shoot and try to climb throughout the growing season, and if you keep cutting back these shoots during the growing season, with the aim – over a period of time – to build up a spur framework (similar to an apple tree), you will encourage these spurs to bear flowers. I know of a garden in Belgium where this task is carried out several times during the summer growth period. The amount of pruning that needs to be done in winter is considerably reduced. As plants age, you can thin out some of the spur branches, again much like an apple tree. Always remove any shoots at the base of the plant, in fact I would remove all shoots below 60cm from ground level, otherwise sucker growth from a grafted plant could take over.

Where to see

- **The Sir Harold Hillier Gardens**
Jermyns Lane, Romsey,
Hampshire SO51 0QA.
Tel 01794 369317/318,
hilliergardens.org.uk
- **Nymans**
Handcross, near Haywards Heath,
West Sussex RH17 6EB.
Tel 01444 405250,
nationaltrust.org.uk/nymans
- **Witch Hazel Nursery**
The Granary, Cranbrook Farm,
Callaways Lane, Newington,
Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 7LU.
Tel 01795 843098,
witchhazelnursery.com
National Collection, open on selected
days only. See website for details.

Where to buy

- **Ashridge Trees**
Grove Cross Barn, Castle Cary,
Somerset BA7 7NJ.
Tel 01963 359444,
ashridgetrees.co.uk
- **Bluebell Nursery and Arboretum**
Annwell Lane, Smisby, Ashby-de-la-
Zouch, Leicestershire LE65 2TA.
Tel 01530 413700,
bluebellnursery.com



W. FLORIBUNDA 'KIMONO'

This delicate-looking cultivar, with whitish flowers on a mauve calyx, is one of the most admired in my collection and a personal favourite. Very floriferous and moderately vigorous, racemes are 35-42cm long.



W. FLORIBUNDA 'KUCHI-BENI'

Has a delicate colour, which many people love, and racemes that are 36-45cm long with around 76 to 86 very pale, mauve-pink flowers. Is moderately vigorous and has a some scent. Best not grown in full sun.



W. FLORIBUNDA 'ROSEA'

Also known as 'Hon-beni' this pretty cultivar has soft lavender-pink flowers and a faint scent. Moderately vigorous with longish (32-40cm) racemes, it is one that works especially well grown over a pergola.



W. SINENSIS 'JAKO'

In Japan this is known as *Nioi-fuji*, which translates as fragrant wisteria, and it certainly lives up to that name. One of the least vigorous wisterias, with moderately long (25-38cm) racemes. AGM. RHS H5.



W. BRACHYBOTRYS 'SHOWA-BENI'

A vigorous cultivar that flowers early with shortish (12-20cm) racemes that are a rich mauveish pink. Nicely scented, it's possibly the best pink cultivar available. AGM. RHS H5.

Eugénie van Weede

The woman who launched the Bingerden Plant Fairs in the Netherlands discusses her early ambitions, her love of English gardens and planting borders in the dark

WORDS JOHN HOYLAND PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

As a young woman in the early 1950s Eugénie van Weede dreamed not of being a gardener but an actress, and came to school in Britain to learn her craft. With her elegant good looks, vivacity and humour, which persist today, it is easy to imagine the success she would have had on the stage, but the difficulties of post-war Europe denied her a moment in the limelight. Theatre's loss was gardening's gain, because Eugénie went on to create one of the Netherlands' most important gardens and to establish a showcase for specialist nurseries, inspiring and encouraging many nurserymen and fellow gardeners along the way.

Growing up in The Hague, Eugénie was not interested in gardening. "My mother was very keen and she used to produce beautiful, colourful bouquets, which I adored. I am sure it was from there that my interest in colour began," she says.

In 1956 Eugénie met her future husband, Dirk, and the following year he took her to Bingerden House in Gelderland, in the eastern part of the Netherlands, which his family had owned since the 1660s. During the Second World War the house had been burned down by the retreating German army and Dirk's father was in the process of having it rebuilt. The yew hedges and topiary that had been laid out in the 1790s had survived. "The memory of that day will never leave me. We parked the car, walked up the drive and came to the courtyard, where I had an overwhelming sense of déjà vu. I felt that I had been here before. I felt comfortable and at home."

It was another 15 years before she thought about the garden at Bingerden. "At the end of a visit to England we went to Sissinghurst Castle," she says. "It was a few years after Vita [Sackville-West] had died and yet you could still feel her spirit everywhere. The garden was a revelation to me. I saw for the first time how the garden at Bingerden might be transformed and the green hedges and topiary surrounded with colour."

With an energy that seems to have dimmed only slightly with the passing decades, she set about tackling the nine acres of gardens. Dividing her time between the family home in Brussels and the garden at Bingerden she worked long days, without help, carving out borders, planting, weeding and trimming hedges. When the daylight started to fade she brought electric lights to where she was working, and installed a fountain so that the sound of water would keep her company. "I planned my weeks very carefully and tackled a specific part of the

garden at a time." It is hard to imagine how she did it. "Looking back, I am not sure how I did it either, but it was great fun." She is laughing as she tells me this. Eugénie laughs a lot and you get the feeling that whatever she does, she is having a great deal of fun doing it. As well as hard physical work there was a lot to learn. "I realised early on that I knew nothing and so went on courses in Britain and read as much as I could. At the time there were very few good Dutch gardening books so I used to order my gardening books from England. Penelope Hobhouse's *Colour in Your Garden* was always on my bedside table."

Eugénie was making her garden at a time of radical change in the Dutch gardening world. Nurserymen Piet Oudolf, Peter Bauwens, Rob Leopold and others, who were transforming the way we garden, all became friends with Eugénie and supported her idea of launching a plant fair at Bingerden. Encouraged by her daughter Constance, she applied the same vigour and enthusiasm to the project as she had to creating the garden. The aim of the event was clear: to promote the very best nurseries and to showcase the finest gardening products and practices. Eugénie explains that there was also another reason. "I still hadn't got a gardener and I thought we might be able to make some money to help pay for one."

The International Specialist Nursery Days at Bingerden, introduced in 1996, are now one of Europe's pre-eminent plant and garden shows, presenting some of the best nurseries in the beautiful setting of Eugénie's garden. Many nurserymen speak of the inspiration and encouragement Eugénie has given them. She, of course, brushes away any hint of a compliment and prefers to talk instead of the support and advice that she has received from growers and gardeners.

Constance has now taken over the running of Bingerden but Eugénie is still very involved. "Everything we do is to help protect Bingerden and preserve it for the future. I have helped along the way and it has been, it still is, great fun." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

International Specialist Nursery Days celebrates 20 years on 17-19 June. Huis Bingerden, Bingerdenseweg 21, 6986 CE Angerlo, the Netherlands. Tel +31 (0) 313 48 42 38, bingerden.com

NEXT MONTH Gardener, presenter and novelist Alan Titchmarsh.

"The garden was a revelation to me. I saw for the first time how Bingerden might be transformed and the green hedges and topiary surrounded with colour"



Three colours green

On a shady site in north London, designer Declan Buckley has worked with the existing trees to create a lushly planted garden that is utterly magical all year round

WORDS NATASHA GOODFELLOW
PHOTOGRAPHS MARIANNE MAJERUS

W

hen garden designer Declan Buckley was asked to work on this north London garden, the brief was a tricky one. First, the area was almost entirely in shade thanks to several enormous oaks, poplars, limes and sycamores and, since it lies within a conservation area, there was no question of cutting them down. Second, the house – a sleek, brick, cedar and glass construction – was designed so almost every room looks out on to the garden and, finally, the house was undergoing extensive remodelling so was, quite literally, a building site with heavily compacted soil.

It would be a challenge for anyone, but as soon as Declan saw the site, any concerns melted away. “I first came in summer when the trees were in full leaf with the sunlight dappling through, and it was just magical,” he says. “I knew immediately we had to do a woodland garden – there was no point pretending this could be anything else.”

Luckily the clients, a young family, loved the idea and so the hunt began for plants that could cope with varying levels of shade, while still providing winter structure and year-round interest. “There’s nowhere to hide here,” says Declan. “The entire garden is always on show.”

Specimen trees, including two *Buxus sempervirens* ‘Rotundifolia’, two acers, a beautiful *Cornus kousa* and an existing corkscrew hazel have been effectively employed to create a mid-level in the garden between the existing tree canopies and the underplanting. “I wanted to draw the eye down,” says Declan. In late winter and early spring, this planting is a sea of delicate *Polystichum* fronds contrasting with the sword-like foliage of *Libertia chilensis* Formosa Group and the buff-coloured *Hakonechloa macra*, dotted with white daffodils. By early summer, the hakonechloa has transformed into a tactile mane of fresh green and the libertia is in flower, joined by swathes of *Geranium nodosum* and *Viola cornuta* Alba Group. *Liriope muscari* ‘Big Blue’, *Anemone x hybrida* ‘Honorine Jobert’ and *Hydrangea macrophylla* ‘Soeur Thérèse’ take over later in the season and continue the white and pale purply blue colour scheme, chosen to light up the shadows. Two climbing hydrangeas – *Schizophragma hydrangeoides* var. *concolor* ‘Moonlight’ and *Pileostegia viburnoides* – have been trained up the trees to clothe the trunks, while domes of box, clumps of *Osmanthus x burkwoodii* and drifts of *skimmia* add evergreen interest.

A simple, resin-bonded gravel path cuts through the planting, wrapping around the house in one direction and leading from the sunken, polished concrete terrace to a suspended garden seat in the other. Privacy is afforded by dense plantings of *Phyllostachys aurea* (restricted from

In brief

What A contemporary woodland garden.

Where North London.

Size 730 square metres.

Soil Clay, mainly dry from underlying tree roots, but with damp patches too.

Climate Temperate with warm summers and cool, damp winters.

Hardiness rating USDA 8.

The *Buxus sempervirens* ‘Rotundifolia’ – pruned into “broccoli-like cloud shapes” – and the *Acer palmatum* (far right) create a mid height level under the tree canopies which, with an underplanting of *Polystichum setiferum*, mimics a woodland glade.

Below, left to right

Spikes of *Digitalis purpurea* f. *albiflora* lift the eye, drawing attention to the *Parthenocissus henryana* clambering over the walls of the house.

Low domes of box contrast well with the spikes of *Libertia chilensis* Formosa Group, which does surprisingly well in the shade of the garden.

Acer palmatum ‘Ukon’ is underplanted with drifts of *Vinca minor* ‘La Grave’ and *Viola cornuta* Alba Group.





4 plants for shady gardens



Libertia chilensis

Formosa Group

A perennial with upright leaves that looks good all year. 90cm. AGM*. RHS H3, USDA 8a-11†.



Disporopsis pernyi

Glossy-leaved evergreen with lemon-scented, bell-shaped flowers. Slowly forms strong colonies. 40cm. USDA 7a-9b.



Polystichum setiferum

An easy, evergreen fern. Happy in dry shade or, with a little more water, some sun. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.



Cornus kousa

Tiny green flowers in May and June are surrounded by showy, creamy-white bracts that fade to pink. 8m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

▷ spreading by a root barrier), which adds a lovely rustling sound as the wind blows through the leaves and droops beautifully after rain.

It looks effortless, but this was far from the case. “We had to rotivate extensively, being careful to avoid all the tree roots,” says Declan, explaining how he tackled the compacted soil. Organic matter was added in huge amounts to improve the soil structure, as well as an extensive irrigation system to counteract the drying effect of so many mature trees. Though important in the first few years, this should hardly be necessary once the new specimen trees are established. “Everything about this garden has been about working with the site to create a sense of place,” says Declan. “It was great to have a client who fully embraced the concept and understood it was just too shady to have a lawn.” □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Buckley Design Associates

Tel 020 7359 9076. Website buckleydesignassociates.com



Seen from the green roof of the house, the resin-bonded gravel paths lead around the garden from the sunken polished concrete terrace. The interplay of textures continues in the planting – in the contrasting foliage of *Hakonechloa macra*, *Buxus sempervirens* ‘Rotundifolia’ and the ferns.

Below, left to right

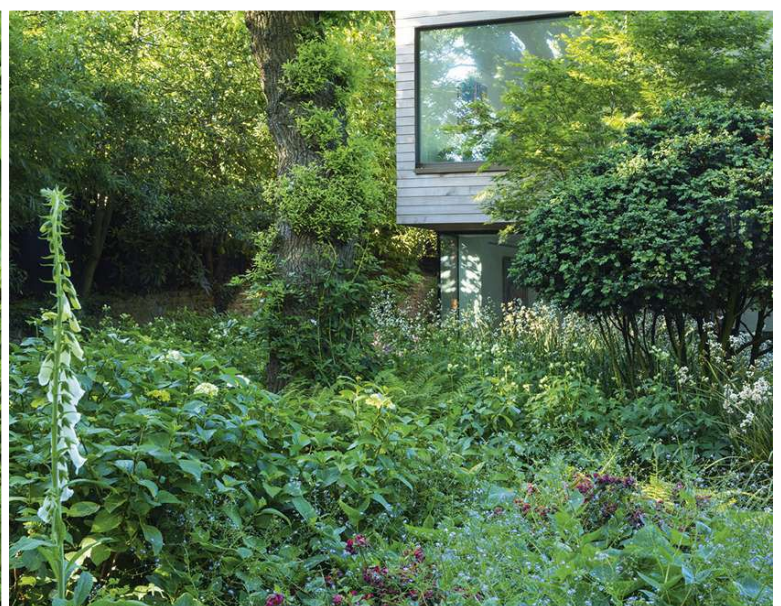
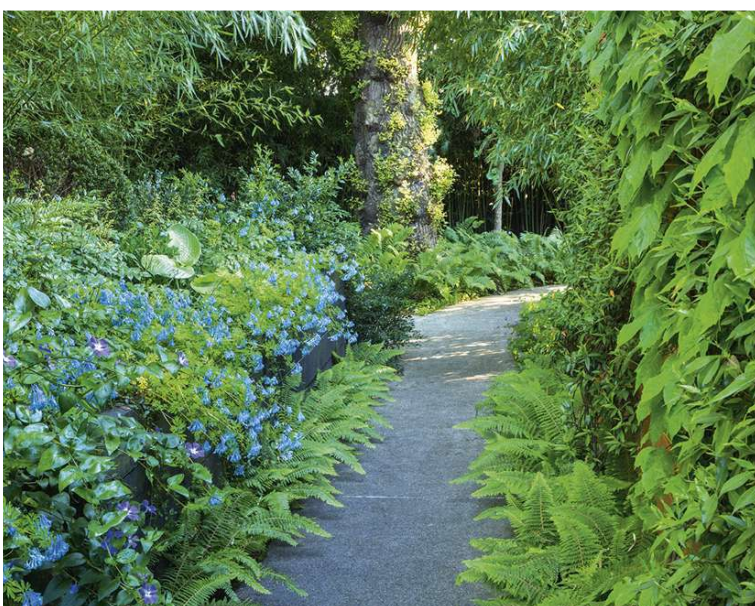
A shady corner offers a secluded spot for this basalt hanging seat, which like the table and chairs is from interior design workshop Maffam Freeform.

The fern-fringed path to the side of the house is flanked by a raised bed, planted with tumbling *Corydalis flexuosa* ‘Blue Panda’.

Dense woodland planting helps to blend the contemporary-style house into its surroundings.



* Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. † Hardiness ratings given where available.





The David Austin roses prove very popular and remarkably hardy in this continental climate. The chimney of an old boiler house towers above the restored greenhouse.



Kingdom of heavenly scent

At Königliche Gartenakademie in Berlin, designers Gabriella Pape and Isabelle Van Groeningen have established not only a garden school and studio, but also a thriving nursery and café

WORDS INA SPERL PHOTOGRAPHS SABRINA ROTHE PRODUCTION MICHAEL BRECKWOLDT

W

hen you pass through the entrance arch – formed by two graceful pear trees – to Königliche Gartenakademie in the suburbs of Berlin, you feel as though you’ve stepped not just into an extraordinary nursery but another world. The sounds from the street immediately recede among an abundance of colour and fragrance, and as you make your way through the nursery, trees and shrubs give way to a selection of fragrant roses. Venture further still and you find yourself among a huge array of perennials arranged by colour, a long border, exuberantly planted with perennials and roses, and finally, at the end of a path lined by *Alchemilla mollis* and *Nepeta racemosa* ‘Walker’s Low’, you reach the shade-loving plants. But even this is still just a fraction of what this plant lover’s paradise has to offer, for the two-acre site also houses a café, design studio and garden school.

It’s all the personal kingdom of German garden designer Gabriella Pape and Belgian garden historian and designer Isabelle Van Groeningen. For 20 years, the pair ran a successful design practice in Oxfordshire, and were influential in the British gardening scene. Then in 2008, they decided it was time for something new. “I wanted my legacy to be more than just 500 big gardens,” says Gabriella. “I wanted to create a cultural institution.”

The pair’s answer was to establish a gardening academy, something they thought was needed more in Germany than the UK. “When I made a garden in Germany,” says Gabriella, “often people ▷

1 In Berlin few people have a garden but most have a balcony or terrace, which is used intensively during the hot summer months. The nursery offers a wide selection of tender shrubs, half-hardy perennials as well as unusual annuals.

2 Although most perennials for sale are sorted by colour, there are mixed displays to give customers inspiration for their planting schemes.

3 A tall espalier hedge of *Malus* ‘Evereste’ divides the woody area from perennial plants.





In the main sales area, perennials are divided into shade lovers and sun lovers, which are then displayed by colour.



Isabelle and Gabriella's office, with its sunny terrace surrounded by *Nepeta racemosa* 'Walker's Low'.

▷ didn't know how to tend it. They were desperate for knowledge." Having decided to make the move, the pair started looking for a location where they could establish their school, and finally found this "monster" of a site, as Gabriella calls it, next to Berlin's Botanic Garden in the suburb of Dahlem.

It turned out to be the perfect location, having once been home to Berlin's highly prestigious Königlische Gärtnerlehranstalt (Royal Gardeners' Training Institute), which dated back to the Prussian garden school founded by Peter Joseph Lenné in 1823.

When in 1903, the school relocated from Potsdam to Berlin a series of historic glasshouses were installed alongside a young *Pinus strobus*. Today that same *Pinus strobus* towers above those glasshouses and the school's original lecture buildings – all of which are still in use. In fact one of the few things Gabriella and Isabelle have changed is the school's name, altering it slightly to Königlische Gartenakademie (Royal Garden Academy), to capitalise on the school's high reputation. "The education there was the best you could get, comparable to that at Kew," says Gabriella, "and we want to maintain this."

Gabriella and Isabelle may want to uphold high standards for the school, but the range of courses they offer – covering everything from growing herbs for the kitchen and planting a window box, to designing a garden – are both accessible and affordable, with prices starting at as little as €8 for an evening lecture. The school now

attracts students from all over Germany, but many more come to visit the plant nursery.

Isabelle, the plantswoman of the pair, is eager to introduce customers to new plants among more familiar fare. "A third of the plants we sell are easily recognised, such as echinaceas," she says. Another third are exciting new plants, and the rest are good, reliable plants she feels deserve to be better known, such as *Montia sibirica*, a little woodland plant, or *Kalimeris incisa* 'Madiva', a disease-free aster relative. Isabelle is proud of the fact that the nursery is introducing more novelties on to the market than is often the case in the UK. "There is a much greater demand here," she says. Another big difference Isabelle has found is that fewer people in Berlin have their own garden, so there's a greater demand for balcony plants.

Alongside the school and nursery, Isabelle and Gabriella also manage the café and several shops in their glasshouses, as well as their garden design service. This is no small endeavour, but the pair's love of plants and gardening is evident in every detail, from the flowers in the nursery to the decoration in the café. It's what distinguishes the Königlische Gartenakademie and makes it so special. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Königlische Gartenakademie, Altensteinstraße 15a, 14195 Berlin, Germany.
Tel +49 (0)30 8322 0900.
Website koeniglische-gartenakademie.de

of Gabriella and Isabelle's plant choices

1 *Stewartia pseudocamellia*

Germans love camellias, however, they are not hardy in this part of the country and *Stewartia* is a good alternative. Gabriella and Isabelle love its flowers and its great shape. It ages beautifully with a distinctive bark and has stunning autumn colour. 10m. AGM*. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

2 *Nepeta kubanica*

This is a well-behaved catmint that does not wander or self-seed, and has a great flower. In winter, the seedheads provide structure in a border. 1.2m. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

3 *Euphorbia seguieriana*

We've only recently discovered this hardy and incredibly long-flowering plant. It looks good in the front of a border with its needle-like foliage in chartreuse green. 50cm. USDA 6a-11b.

4 *Eupatorium rugosum* 'Chocolate'

This is a fantastic foliage plant. At the end of September it flowers with small, pure-white flowers, which go well with the dark foliage. 1.2m. USDA 5a-9b.

5 *Rosa Harlow Carr* (= 'Aushouse')

One of Gabriella and Isabelle's favourite roses, it has the most fantastic perfume and rich flowers and is a very healthy plant. In 2015, lots of roses had problems with leaf curl, but not this one. But beware, it is extremely prickly. 1m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-10b.

6 *Rosa* 'Guirlande d'Amour'

A Belgian rambling rose, which, unlike most ramblers, is repeat flowering and doesn't grow too large. It doesn't have much scent, though. 4m. USDA 6a-9b.

7 *Boehmeria plataniifolia*

An impressive, shade-loving perennial with dramatic foliage for late summer interest. The flowers are subtle little tassels. 1.2m. USDA 4a-10b.

8 *Stipa barbata*

A very tactile, feathery grass with the most amazing seedheads. It makes Isabelle think of the historic Karl Foerster garden in Potsdam-Bornim, where she first encountered it. It needs a dry, sunny position in well-drained soil. 90cm. USDA 6a.





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design

Design update, ideas and sourcebook

UPDATE COMPILED BY ANNIE GATTI



INSTALLATION

Natural hive

The Hive, an award-winning installation by Wolfgang Buttress, which was the centrepiece of the UK Pavilion at Milan Expo 2015, has a new temporary home at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. The 17m-high,

lattice-work structure that suggests a swarm of bees leaving a hive will be sited among meadow planting and form the focus of a programme of bee-related events. From 18 June, kew.org

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EXHIBITION

Soaring walls

Opening on 10 June, this summer's Serpentine Pavilion is a soaring, pointed structure made of interlocking fibreglass bricks. Designed by Danish architects

Bjarke Ingels Group, the walls form a cavern-like interior that by night will host the gallery's Park Nights performances. This year it is joined by four contemporary

summer houses, one by Berlin-based studio Barkow Leibinger, the other three by architects Kunlé Adeyemi, Yona Friedman and Asif Khan. serpentinegalleries.org



FESTIVAL

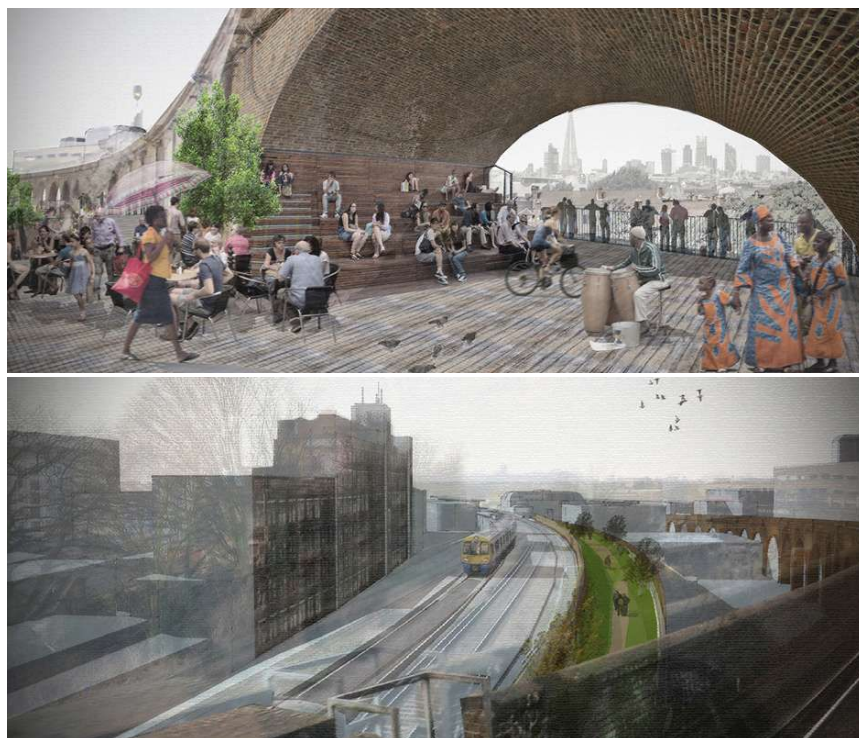
Art in the wild

Chaumont Cairn, an egg-shaped, stone sculpture by British landscape artist Andy Goldsworthy, is one of several major new artworks that will be on display at the International Garden Festival at Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire until November. The art season, now in its eighth year, runs in conjunction with the French garden festival and has attracted a major line-up of international artists this year, including Giuseppe Penone, Cai Guo-Qiang and Pauline Bazignan. domaine-chaumont.fr/en

COVER UP

Brighten up a tired-looking terrace, decking area or balcony with one of these reversible outdoor rugs from American designer Fab Hab. Available in a range of bold geometric patterns and colours, they have strong eco credentials too as they're made from recycled plastic straws. Prices start from £49.95, cuckooland.com





COMMUNITY PARK

Peckham high

Peckham Coal Line, a proposed new community-led linear park that uses 1km of raised coal sidings to provide green space above this heavily built-up part of south London, has secured sufficient funds through crowd funding to appoint a design and feasibility study. The project led by architectural practice Adams & Sutherland will link the neighbourhood's existing green spaces. peckhamcoalline.strikingly.com



DESIGN CONFERENCE

Back to nature

Book now for the inaugural European Landscape Conference where speakers, including James Hitchmough and landscape architect Thomas Doxiadis, will debate our relationship with nature in an increasingly urbanised world. Delegates to the conference in Cirencester will have the chance to tour six remarkable private gardens nearby, including Througham Court (above). 2-5 September, europeanlandscapeconference.com

NEW DESIGN

Link to the past

English Heritage has announced the winning design for a new footbridge to link Tintagel Castle in Cornwall with the nearby headland. Designed by Belgian firm Ney and Partners with London architects Williams Matthews, the cantilevered bridge will span more than 70m and use local slate for its decking and contrasting weathered and non-weathered steel for its other surfaces. english-heritage.org.uk



Notebook

- Nick Bailey, head gardener at the **Chelsea Physic Garden**, will discuss his first show garden for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show and share tips from his new book on colour in the garden. 2 June, 7pm, chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk
- Join designer Xa Tollemache for a Garden Museum **tour of three Suffolk gardens**, including her own rose-filled gardens at Helmingham Hall and her design at Hill House. 16 June, £125 (Friends of the Museum, £95), gardenmuseum.org.uk
- This year's **Gardeners' World Live** launches a new category of show gardens for small spaces. The five designs selected from the Association of Professional Landscapers' Avenue Show Garden Competition include a wildlife-friendly garden for a downsizing couple. 16-19 June, bbcgardenersworldlive.com
- Enjoy a rare opportunity to **visit three inspiring Somerset gardens**, including Stavordale Priory [issue 217, page 34], the Grade I-listed home of Sir Cameron Mackintosh and Michael Le Poer Trench, with gardens partly designed by its previous owner, designer Georgia Langton. 17 June, £85, gardendaysout.com
- James Alexander-Sinclair will talk on **designing with roses** at Borde Hill, Sussex, including a tour of the Elizabethan House, and wine and canapés. 23 June, 2-5pm, £30 (RHS members, £25), bordehill.co.uk
- Garden designer Ann-Marie Powell has been appointed creative director for the inaugural **London Flower Show**, a four-day event at Osterley House and Park, Middlesex, in September. The show will include show gardens, floral displays, music and art installations. 8-11 September, londonflowershow.co.uk

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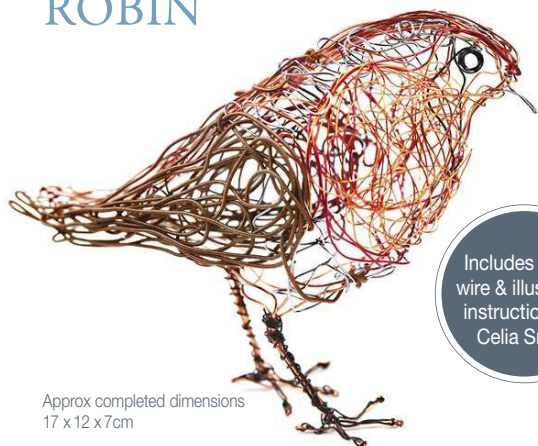


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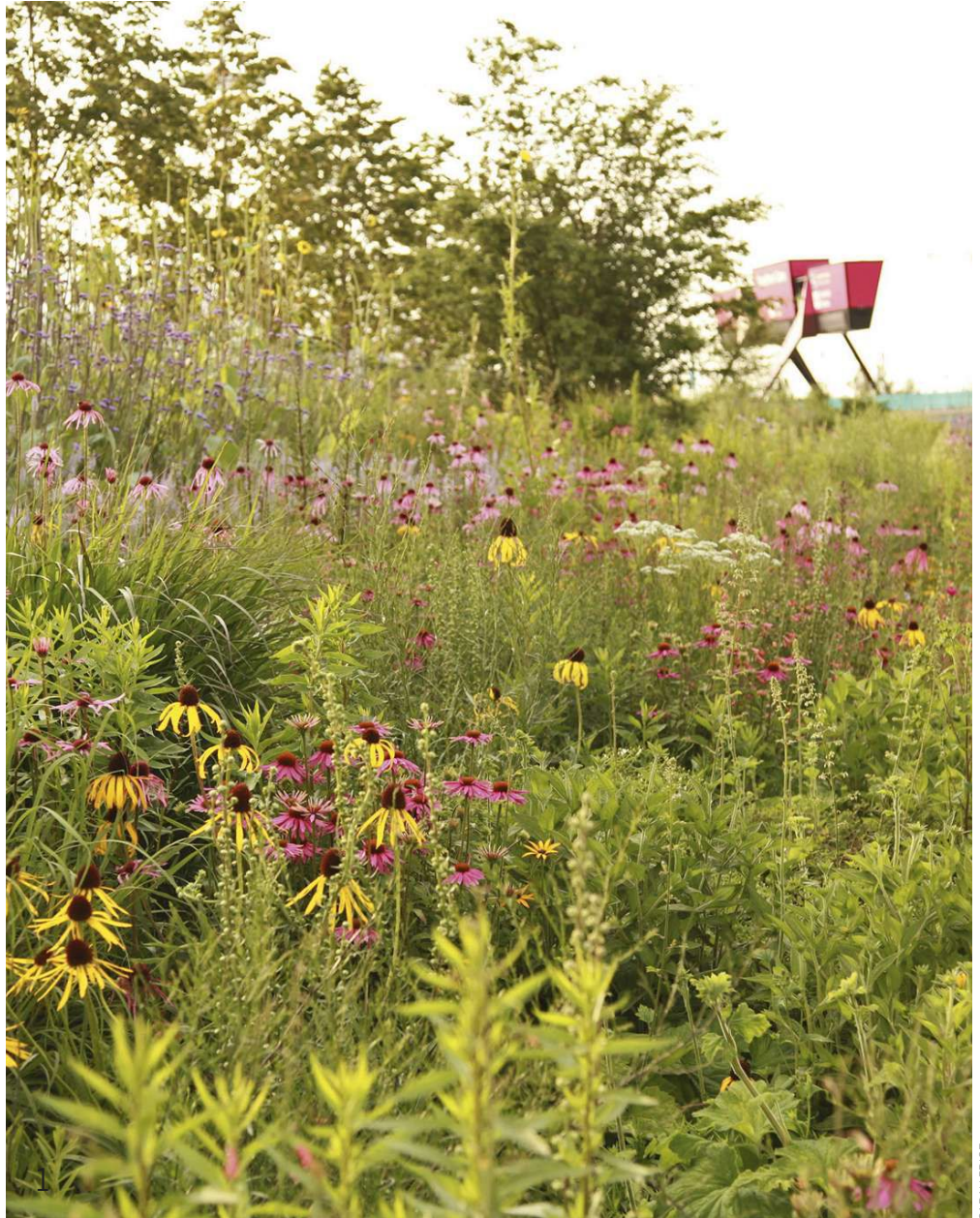
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1 First sight

I used photo collages and drawings to compose the designs for the Olympic gardens at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, in east London.

These mood boards were invaluable in communicating our vision for communities of plants sourced from across the world and never before grown together in the UK on such a scale. This view is of the North American garden (co-designed with James Hitchmough) where prairie plants *Echinacea pallida* and *Echinacea paradoxa* dominate in early July.



SARAH PRICE



Sarah Price is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who won worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 Olympic Park.

The gardener's gaze

In the last of her design series, Sarah Price encourages us to look carefully at the world around us and store ideas away for our future designs

WORDS SARAH PRICE

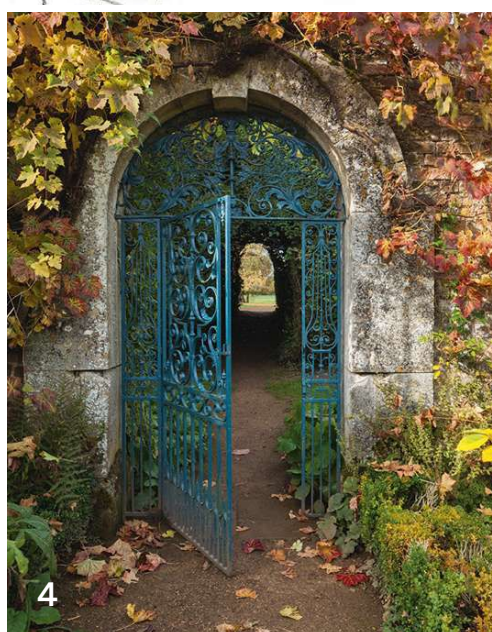


2 Drawing the eye

A collage of carefully selected images (photographs and drawings), such as this sketch I made for a new garden at the Chapel café in Abergavenny, can more easily capture the spirit of the design and be a more powerful way of communicating a design's atmosphere than a computer-generated 3D walkthrough.

3 Long view

Creative exchanges across the visual arts often spark innovation. Architectural practice Studio Weave's designs are diverse, playful and open minded. Here, dunes form a dynamic backdrop to the sculptural twists and flashes of colour of their designs for *The Longest Bench* at Littlehampton, West Sussex.



4 Associations

Even the most illustrious locations have inspiration for observant, down-to-earth gardeners. The autumnal shades of this vine, contrast with the peacock blue of the wrought-iron gate at Rousham House, Oxfordshire. This complementary colour association would work just as well in an everyday setting.

In this series I've deliberately chosen not to replicate a typical garden design course that covers the essential aspects of design in a logical progression. Instead I've ranged across a diverse set of subjects, choosing some because they're important to my own work, such as pattern, wild flowers and designing with trees, and others because they're overlooked in more conventional approaches to garden design, such as colour, local crafts and movement.

A thread that runs throughout the series is the habit of looking. But there's a big difference between 'seeing' and 'mindful looking'. Paying full attention from the widest perspective to the smallest detail, then analysing and understanding what you see and storing it away so you can draw on it in the future. Like many people, my first lessons in looking were in art classes at school. My teacher urged me to spend more time actively looking at the unlikely arrangements of

fruit, cloth and dried flowers than staring at my evolving picture on my page. This stern but excellent advice has remained with me. Just as a still life elevates everyday items into objects of fascination, bringing cut flowers from your garden into your home makes you look in detail because you're seeing them in a different setting. It can even, spark new ideas for unusual planting combinations.

A completely different method of 'active' looking is through the lens of a camera. The viewfinder detaches us and frames our surroundings like a picture. It reduces three dimensions to two. Printing a garden scene in black and white also helps you to look analytically. Without the distraction of colour you can view the garden as an arrangement of shapes that needs organising into a successful composition rather than as a collection of plants. But don't be fooled into thinking that taking photos is a substitute for

5 Field of vision

Subdued views can be just as inspiring as those that shout attention. The plants growing here at North Uist, in the Outer Hebrides, are not ones you'd necessarily want to grow in your garden even if you did have the same wet, marginal conditions.

The subtle range of colours, pattern and composition, however, could be recreated using plants with similar visual qualities, such as grasses.

6 Timeline

This well-worn footpath within a hazel coppice suggests the passing of time. It's a detail that could easily pass unnoticed yet this subtle change in topography increases the sense of intimacy within the plantings.

7 Seeing patterns

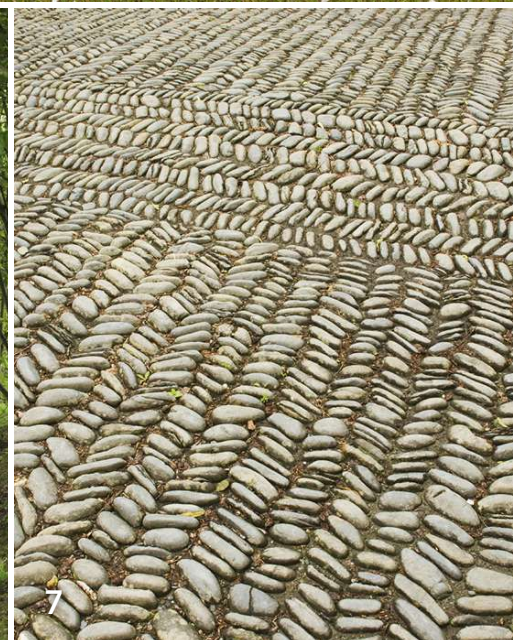
Looking attentively at our everyday surroundings will reward us with a wealth of design ideas. These herringbone cobbles in the estate yard at Llanerchaeron, Ceredigion, are still a striking sight 200 years after they were laid. Patterns of historic paving designs can be originally adapted using contemporary paving materials such as narrow Dutch bricks, sawn stone or concrete pavers.



5



6



7

JONATHAN BUCKLEY / NICOLA STOCKEN / GAPPHOTOS; PAUL HARRIS / NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES

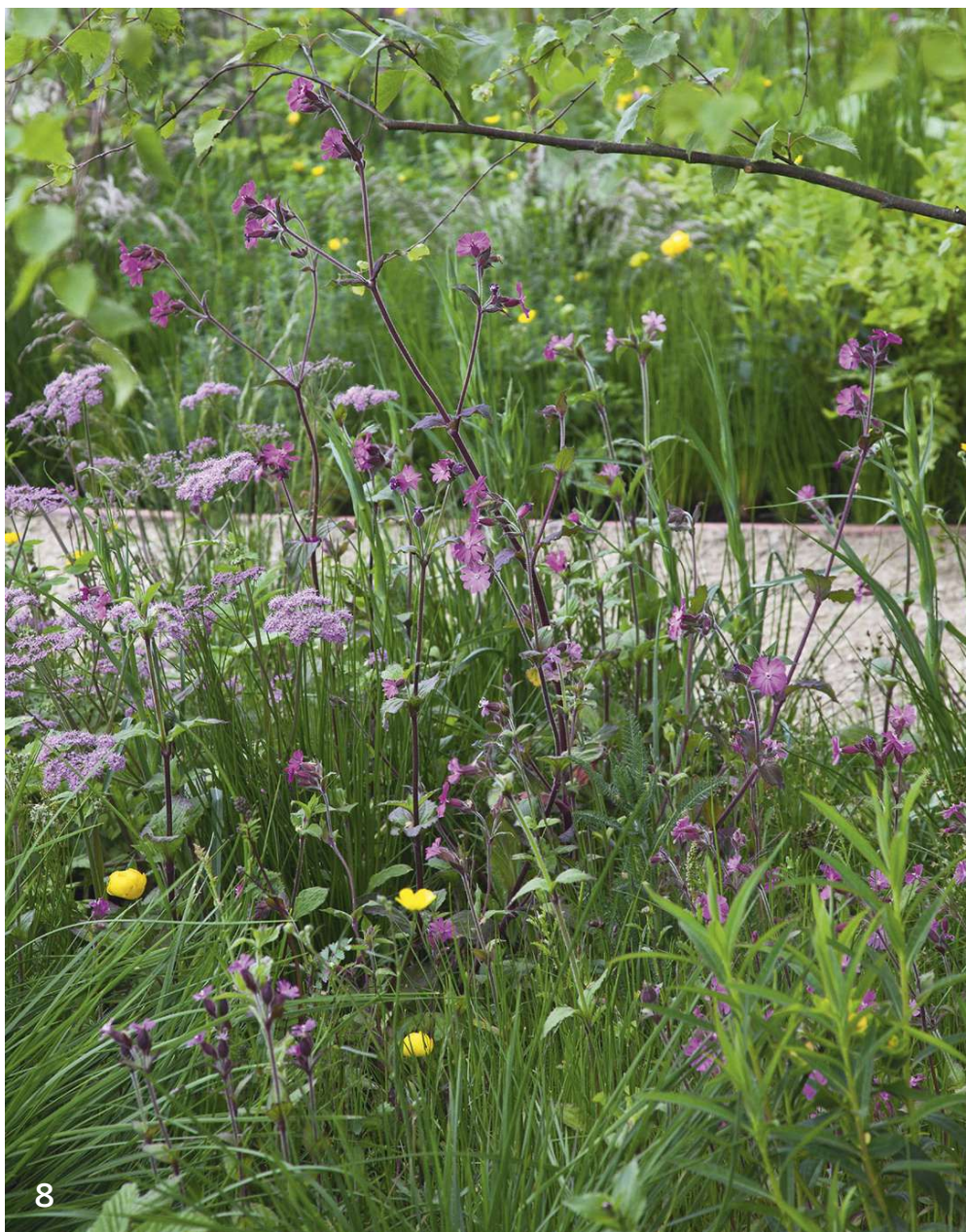
▷ looking with your bare eyes. I find the best way to remember something is to draw it. It takes more effort than pressing the shutter but even a rough squiggle helps commit something to memory.

The natural world is an inexhaustible source of inspiration. My aim in design is to simultaneously exaggerate and simplify the most attractive and exciting moments in nature. Flower-rich meadows full of ox-eye daisies and *Deschampsia* and *Molinia* grasses were the blueprint for my collaboration with Nigel Dunnett on the European gardens at the Olympic Park. Different *Molinia* cultivars extended visual variations, from the low and stiff *Molinia caerulea* 'Moorhexe' to the towering soft arcs of *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Transparent', which were then overlaid with layers of colour.

Looking at different ways that plants colonise the ground influences my plant placements. Certain natural patterns are easier

to see than others. Tussocks of dark rushes, *Juncus effusus* are pronounced in over-grazed grasslands, while in the tangle of a mature forest, the distribution of mature oak and beech trees are harder to discern. I plant in generous quantities to replicate the impressive sight of plants growing en masse. I mingle my species, planting satellite groups with outlying singletons. Nature abhors bare soil so I plant densely to cover the ground and squeeze out opportunist weeds. I introduce plants with strong architectural forms, such as grasses or clear stem shrubs or trees to create more ordered and stylised pictures than truly wild plantings.

Boundaries between the visual arts, fashion, architecture and interiors have become increasingly fluid, with many artists moving between different forms of creative expression. Grayson Perry made his name as a potter, but he has also designed staggeringly



ROB WHITWORTH / GAP PHOTOS: THE GREAT PIECE OF TURF BY ALBRECHT DÜRER, 1503. ©ALBERTINA VIENNA



8 Looking to art

Inspiration stems from many visual sources: Albrecht Dürer's detailed renderings of the natural world, inspired the intricate plantings of my 2012 Chelsea garden for *The Telegraph*. Like in his famous watercolour *The Great Piece of Turf* (above), painted in 1503, native grasses, such as *Melica*, *Agrostis* and *Deschampsia* jostle with commonplace 'weeds', such as meadow buttercup and herb robert.

Further reading

Planting in a Post-Wild World by Thomas Rainer and Claudia West (Timber Press, 2015).

A book that captures the excitement of looking to nature for planting inspiration.

beautiful tapestries, a front cloth for the English National Ballet and has recently designed and built *A House for Essex*. Looking at other art forms is not simply about finding ideas to lift, it's about enriching visual sensibility with as many sources as possible. Imagination is something mysterious and hard to pin down. If you're suffering designer's 'creative block' you might be more likely to find that elusive spark of inspiration from a night of contemporary dance than another garden visit.

The only thing worse than a lack of ideas is too many. I'll usually have to refine my selection of ideas. One large moodboard will evolve into several different boards for different areas of the design. There will always be common visual themes that unite each board. For instance, key linking plants that will grow in both sun and shade, or a structural plant or paving material that will be used throughout. In

this way the design will have unity. I'm not suggesting that designing a garden is as straight forward as arranging images on a board but it's a good place to start. For capturing the feel and atmosphere of a garden, a collage of carefully selected photos and drawings can be a more powerful tool than a computer-generated 3D walkthrough.

The internet age is one of image saturation. It's an incredible resource, but it can also feel overwhelming. It can seem like everything's been done before and to some extent that's true. However, what makes something fresh and original is how the elements are applied and combined in a particular place. That's the great advantage of a garden compared to the sterile 'white cube' of a gallery that could be in London, San Francisco or Tokyo. It's exciting but it obliges garden designers to look closely and carefully not just at their own work but also at the wider setting in which it exists. □

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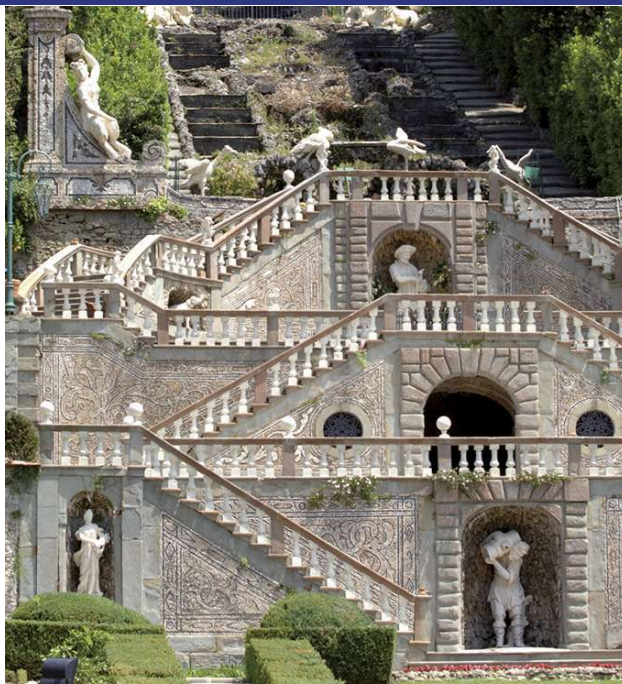
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Chelsea Flower Show 2016

Our guide to some of the fabulous exhibitors at this world-famous event



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The first is an urban landscape inspired by the plans for Battersea Power Station, which feature layers reminiscent of the geology of natural rock together with obtuse angles; the second is a private residential garden.

On the lower level is a loosely planted contemporary gravel garden with a scattering of Schellevis planks leading to giant 1m x 1m cantilever steps set into the edge of the upper terrace.

The atmosphere on the upper level is very different. Minimal and laid out on a grid, it features the new cube seating from Schellevis.

The back wall is clad in smaller Schellevis pavers in a chequer board pattern with rusted steel panels in a twig pattern. Two multi-stem *Betula* trees dominate the stand with under planting of *Carex* and a palette of magenta, pink and orange with bronze undertones.

Stand location: FR324

Contact details

Schellevis UK
16 Wycombe Place,
London SW18 2LT

Tel 07774 923181/020 8874 4056

Web schellevis.co.uk

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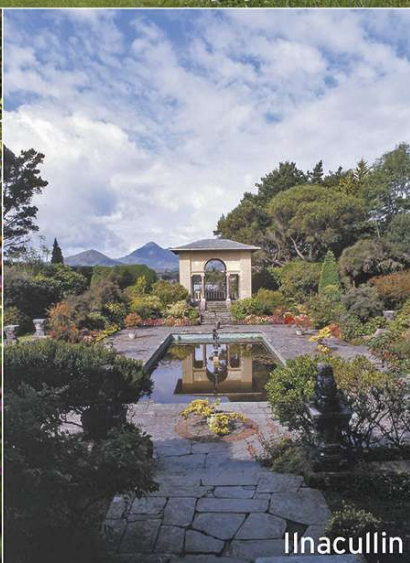
How to create wild-style planting is explained in *New Wild Garden* by Ian Hodgson, reviewed on page 111.



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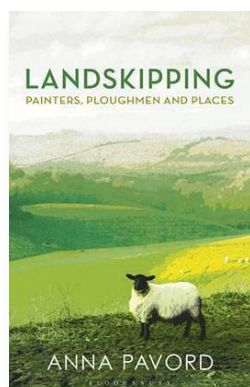
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Book reviews



LANDSKIPPING: PAINTERS, PLOUGHMEN AND PLACES

by Anna Pavord

Bloomsbury, £20
ISBN 978-1408868911

Anna Pavord gives a thoughtful and deeply personal account of our changing attitudes to the wider landscape.

Reviewer Ambra Edwards is a writer and garden historian.

Like Anna Pavord, I have chosen to live among the soft, enfolding hills of west Dorset. So perhaps it is inevitable that I should share some of her prejudices – a ‘need for land to go up and down if I’m to feel comfortable in it’, a preference for the quietly pastoral over the thrillingly sublime.

The book traces our changing relationship with landscape. The rapturous responses of the first landscape tourists, 18th-century painters and writers, are tellingly contrasted with the utilitarian approach of the agricultural improvers. We ride cheerily along with William Cobbett; sigh with hopelessly idealistic Thomas Johnes. We learn about sheep leazes and water meadows; that there’s no such thing as common land.

Pavord’s writing is pure delight – elegant, observant and funny. ‘As an environment’, she declares, ‘a golf course is a fascist state’. She imagines the megaliths

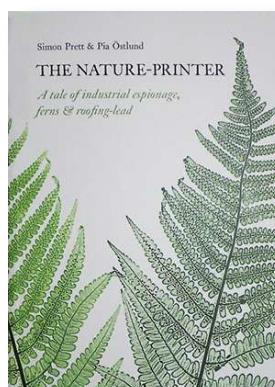
of Stonehenge as performing elephants and gives a hilarious account of an insufficiently libidinous Welsh ram.

But there’s little enough to laugh at. She is alarmed by the bureaucratic, bunker mentality that reduces the subtle complexities of the land to ‘a series of environments, each with its list of inhabitants’. She deplores the ignorant vilification of farmers, pointing out that most of the landscape we admire has been shaped by years of human activity. She loathes the bullying desire to tell us what to see, that in littering the land with signboards and walkways, reduces it to a ‘sanitised masquerade of the real thing’.

Yet *Landskipping* is as much celebration as polemic. Concluding with a beautiful account of her own ‘particular patch’, her visceral love for her chosen landscape carries us with her, filling us also with ‘a slow-burning joy’.

Book offer

RRP £20. Reader offer price £17 including p&p*.



THE NATURE-PRINTER

by Simon Prett & Pia Östlund

The Timpres, £10 (Paperback)
ISBN 978-0993484506

Part essay, part story, this book follows printmaker Pia Östlund on her quest to unearth the lost art of nature printing.

Reviewer Rosanna Morris is a freelance writer and editor.

In the library of the Chelsea Physic Garden, Swedish printmaker Pia Östlund comes across *The Ferns of Great Britain and Ireland*, written by Thomas Moore (curator at the garden from 1848 to 1887) and printed by Henry Bradbury. Flicking through its pages she is awed by the life-like images of ferns that are neither photographs nor illustrations but instead have been created using the obscure process of nature printing.

This book recounts her quest to find out how it was achieved, and why the Victorian technique was invented and subsequently abandoned. A journey that takes her from London to Gosport to Vienna.

Author Simon Prett follows Östlund’s mission and examines the story behind the craft, and the reasons for its disappearance, weaving in facts and history with extracts from a plethora of sources that Östlund uncovers through her searches. A curious tale unfolds, featuring historical

figures in the printing industry, including Bradbury and the Austrian printer and botanical illustrator Alois Auer.

The book is both document to a lost art, and the story of one woman’s remarkable tenacity. Östlund tracks down and consults world experts; joins fern and historical printing societies; visits lead factories; and tries countless methods – many in vain. Each time, Prett observes her breakthroughs and her frustrating dead ends.

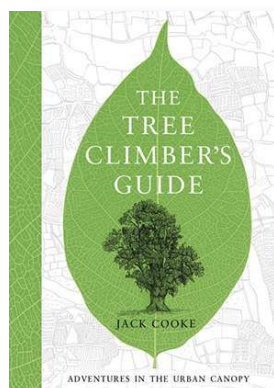
Prett is descriptive and colourful, verging on poetic, when following Östlund, evoking the atmosphere of her hunt; describing her strolling across Clifton Suspension Bridge to meet a university professor, or knee deep in ferns on a field trip in Rickmansworth.

The book is text heavy – it has about 30 images sectioned together towards the end that leave you longing for more – but you can’t help but be drawn into this intriguing journey too.

Book offer

Sorry, no book offer available on this title.

Book reviews



THE TREE CLIMBER'S GUIDE

by Jack Cooke

HarperCollins, £14.99
ISBN 978-0008153915

This book is a lovely tale of a tree climber's exploration of the canopies of his favourite named trees in London gardens.

Reviewer Tony Kirkham is the head of Arboretum at Kew.

Climbing horse chestnut trees to harvest the early conkers as a child was the physical endurance activity that first kindled my lifelong passion for trees.

The taller the tree and the fewer the lateral branches, the greater the challenge to scale and the faster the adrenalin rush. But free climbing large shade trees can be dangerous and back at Kew my arborists use specially designed safety climbing equipment to aid access and protect them from falls.

I've always been keen to give everyone the opportunity to access the upper canopy of the larger shade trees, hence why we built the Xstrata Treetop Walkway in the arboretum at Kew, to allow visitors of all ages to witness the spectacular views from a tree's perspective.

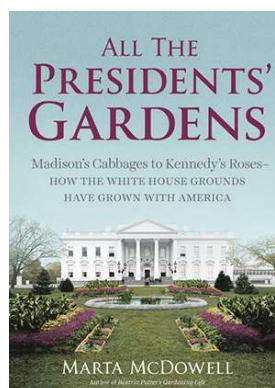
This guide book is a unique approach to writing about trees, which I don't believe has ever been done before. It gives the reader a graphic description of the magnificent stature and

architecture of more than 80 named trees, growing in London parks, garden squares, cemeteries and churchyards and even two named in my secret garden at Kew that the author climbed.

There's a brief chapter on the history species growing within the M25; how they arrived in these locations and their climbing attributes in terms of bark characteristics and branching, and the author's favourite climbing tree growing by the Battersea Park boating lake. Illustrated with simple, yet beautiful, black and white line drawings by Jennifer Pitchers, this is a fascinating account of how the writer manages to scale some of the denizens of the city, by grappling and clawing his way up to the lowest branches, often the hardest part of the climb. I'll never condone climbing trees without permission or safety aids, but this is a lovely book, with a new view on London's arboreal living monuments.

Book offer

RRP £14.99. Reader offer price **£12.99** including p&p*.



ALL THE PRESIDENTS' GARDENS

by Marta McDowell

Timber Press, £20
ISBN 978-1604695892

A well-presented history of the White House garden, which doubles as a companion to early American garden history.

Reviewer Tim Richardson is a garden critic and regular columnist.

If good books can be made of unpromising material, then this is a classic of that genre. Marta McDowell appears to have realised immediately that the White House garden is not intrinsically interesting. So she uses the subject instead as a peg on which to hang a useful, pertinently illustrated history of early American gardening. The fact she describes her own first visit to the White House garden only in the book's epilogue would have seemed bizarre in any other circumstance.

Early chapters, such as Versailles on the Potomac, trace the way the initial garden layout (axial lines of trees) was soon augmented (1804) by a more romantic area of lawns and clumped trees, a look that came to define the whole. Successive Presidents and First Ladies have tinkered with the estate, from James Madison who ordered flowering shrubs, to 'Ike' Eisenhower who turned a lawn into a putting green. We learn

that the pet goats belonging to Abraham Lincoln's children ate all the flowers, and that the Shaker community were early seed specialists who supplied material for the gardens.

Perhaps the most important innovations were the East Garden created by Beatrix Farrand in 1916, subsequently reworked by 'Bunny' Mellon; and the celebrated Rose Garden (also by Mellon) commissioned by the Kennedys. We learn that early in his presidency, JFK had felt embarrassed by the state of the White House garden – especially the lawns – having visited Windsor Castle and Schönbrunn in Vienna.

The narrative rather gallops through the Carter, Reagan and Bush administrations, but comes right up to date with Michelle Obama's vegetable garden.

The early part of the story is by far the most interesting. As a general history of American gardening one hopes it will not be overlooked.

Book offer

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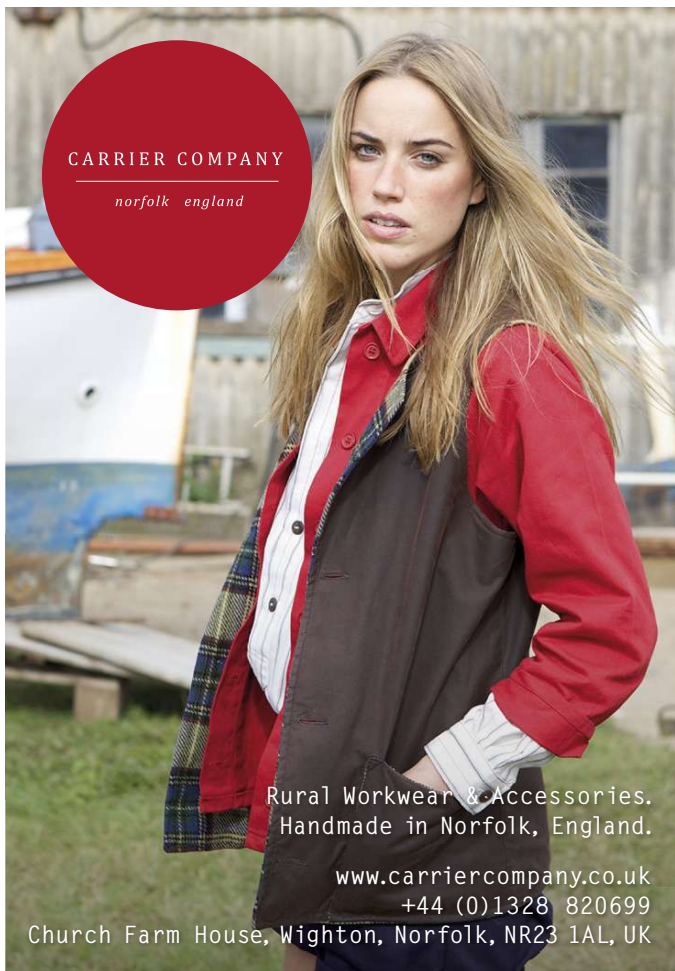
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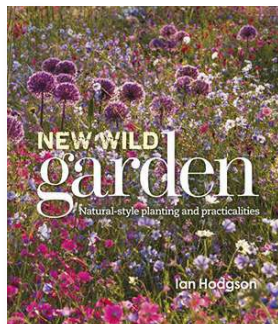
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Book reviews



NEW WILD GARDEN: NATURAL-STYLE PLANTING AND PRACTICALITIES

by Ian Hodgson

Frances Lincoln, £25
ISBN 978-0711237285

A manual for creating wild, naturalistic spaces that should enthuse readers to consider the plight of pollinators.

Reviewer Julia Wylie is a freelance gardener and writer.

Despite the multi-layered planting on the front cover, this is essentially a step-by-step practical manual for beginner gardeners who are new to creating wild-style spaces.

The difference between replicating man-managed (hay meadows) and truly wild landscapes (bluebell woods) is clearly explained. Preparation and development are well documented, showing that wild-style planting is not about just letting plants 'go wild'. The refreshingly pragmatic approach highlights the importance of removing perennial weeds before seed-sowing or planting. Choosing plants suited to the site and soil conditions are also discussed in depth.

It was disappointing to read that cornfield weeds/annuals are mentioned as plants in traditional hay meadows. Strictly speaking, meadows are man-made, managed landscapes with grass and perennials. Poppies, cornflowers and other

annuals only grow where the soil has been disturbed, which is why they abounded in arable land after ploughing and before the widespread use of pesticides. They wouldn't grow in a traditional grassy meadow and should really be called 'arables'.

A suggestion to mimic nature by using bold repetition of the chosen plant species to create more dramatic multi-layered displays seems to be missing. Especially considering the book promises to explain the new natural style advocated by designers such as Piet Oudolf, Christopher Bradley-Hole and Dan Pearson.

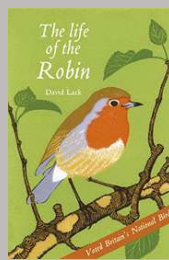
However, considering the plight of pollinators and wildlife in general as a result of habitat loss, encouraging readers, as the author does, to maximise their spaces with meadow effects, ponds and refuges for wildlife is most important. The section on container gardening will be especially useful to those with smaller spaces.

Book offer

RRP £25. Reader offer price **£21** including p&p*.

Other books

The best of the rest of this month's new titles offers everything from fragrant flowers to the finest English country gardens



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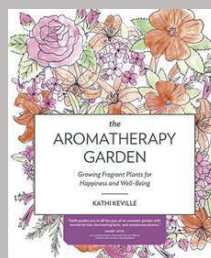
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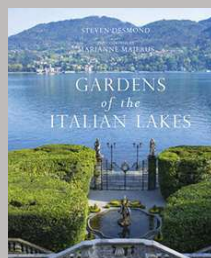
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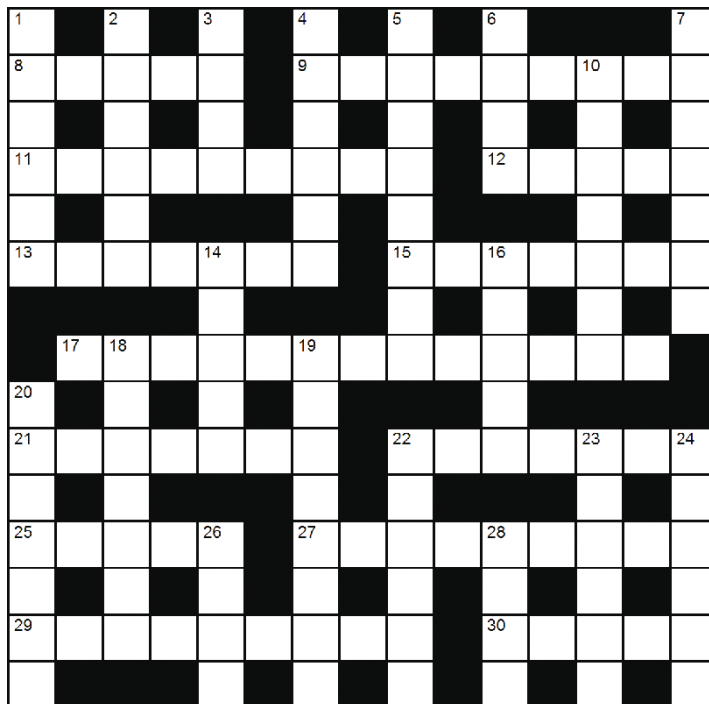
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Crossword



ACROSS

- 8** *Yucca flaccida* '___' – alternative in *Hedera* (5)
9 Cor! – mosaic devastated the *Montbretia* genus (9)
11 Describes repeat flowering in a season – ten, matron, oddly! (9)
12 Goes out with... stoned fruits (5)
13 The 'spider' orchid removes carbon from cabbage genus (7)
15 Infection: a seed is ruined (7)
17 Skilled in growing plants, environmentalist identified as culprit (5-8)
21 In *Tresco*, no clear genus of deciduous ferns (7)
22 Produces 'sports'? Must eat, somehow! (7)
25 Pear genus (5)
27 Pea/bean relative, also called French honeysuckle and Sweet vetch – a red mushy mesh! (9)
29 The cornflower genus – provides a neat cure (9)
30 Vineyard fruit precedes hyacinth if *Muscari* (5)

DOWN

- 1** Timid *Ribes* contains leaf's central vein (6)
2 Plant commonly called 'Mexican

- aster' comes out at start of April (6)
3 Common cornflower colour can include yellow initially (4)
4 Genus of plants in buttercup family – in fact a Easter-lily! (6)
5 Main presenter of BBC *Gardeners' World* (5,3)
6/26 Such weather's unusual in June – producing chilled *Antirrhinum*? (4,4)
7 Composite flowers – dead if you're pushing them up! (7)
10 Gas produced by decomposing vegetation (7)
14 Excellent, what water-retaining granules do when wet! (5)
16 Dear description of Basil and William? (5)
18 Range of a plant's underground growth – or nut or bananas! (4,3)
19 Like fennel fronds they fear damage (8)
20 Thicket of trees periodically maintained (7)
22 *Mespilus* is the genus of this apple-like fruit (6)
23 A red and white dahlia made from rattan! (6)
24 ___savory is its annual form (6)
26 See 6 down
28 Newsagent stocks a culinary herb of *Salvia* genus! (4)

SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

MAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS 1 Flag 4 Mock orange 9 Balmoral 10 Gather 11 Gallon 13 Manuring 14 Wigwags 15 Chicon 17/3 Little Gem 19 Pollard 21 Peter Pan 23 Orchid 25 Foster 26 Eranthis 28 Well-rotted 29 Pods.

DOWN 2 Liana 4 Maranta 5 Calamus 6 Organic 7 Astor 8 Greenwood 12 Light 14 White rose 16 Isaac 18 Esparto 19 Pinsent 20 Leopard 22 Extol 24 Ivied 27 Top.

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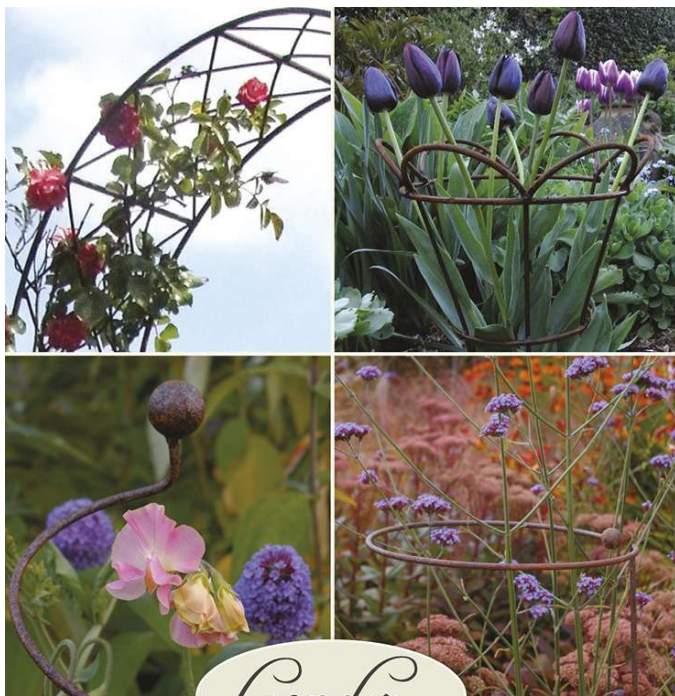
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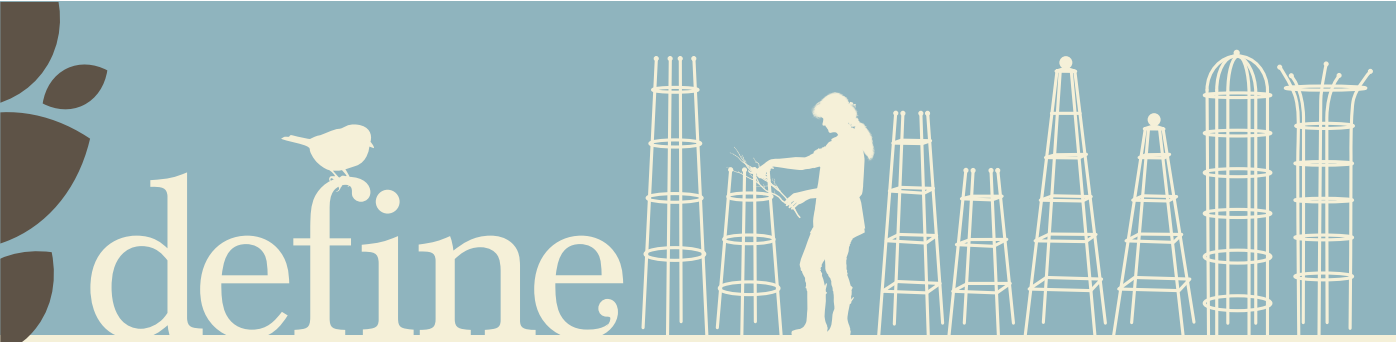
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What a difference a deck makes...

That might be a rather cheesy pun, but the sentiment is quite sincere - hopefully it will get your attention, you may read on, then I can tell you a little about the difference a deck can make to you? With the heady promise of long hot summer days, our thoughts readily turn to making the most of our outside space. I don't think I'm alone in wanting to get projects sorted, so I can get the hard work out of the way and then be outside relaxing and enjoying the better weather. This is exactly what spurred me on to get a decking project underway last March.

I had an area at home leading out to the back garden from two sets of French windows. It was rather depressing and dingy, especially as this was what you saw from the house and the first thing that you saw when stepping outside. Not a great first impression!

My plan was to consolidate the two areas adjacent to the doors, cover over some old concrete, take out old decking tiles and remove a rockery. By covering it with an L shaped deck, there would be

room for a small bistro style table set - this part of the garden gets morning sun, so it will be lovely for weekend breakfasts. There would also be room for a storage box, planters for fruit trees and decorative planting. All in all, a much better use of space. We managed to get this completed well before Easter, which was great because it meant other weekends could be spent doing the nice stuff like sourcing plants, pots and prettifying up other parts of the garden.

This was a fairly simple use of deck, but there's so much more that it can do. The example below shows how it can make sloping ground useable - as you can see there was quite a drop from the back of this house to the grass, which previously had some concrete steps down to the lawn. The decked area is now level with the house, enabling the occupants to enjoy a large raised deck perfect for dining and relaxing.

It must be said that when committing to a project like this you would want the materials to last, so it's well worth investing in Jacksons deck boards, which like all their timber products are guaranteed for 25 years. If you go to your dedicated web page www.jacksons-fencing.co.uk/lifestyle there are links to info on decking to help you find out more.

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La dame aux japonicas

Camellias, with their ephemeral beauty, were something of a fleeting passion for Frank until a visit to a Japanese-style garden gave him new ideas

WORDS FRANK RONAN ILLUSTRATION CELIA HART

Summer is not, you might think, the appropriate time of year to be talking about camellias, but bear with me. Glorious in their season, there aren't many worth a glance by now, and that is their problem. They are, for the most part, more substance than character, and it is hard to justify the elbow room on that precious west-facing wall in a limited garden.

As a beginning gardener I had an instant passion for them, and seem to remember buying three in my first big nursery splurge – somewhere down the back end of the King's Road (it was also, not coincidentally, the first day I was ever set loose with a credit card). Later, while living in Scotland, I came to admire them even more when we used to go and see them on the Isle of Gigha, where they grew to arboreal proportions; great walls of blossom in an Argyll woodland.

It wasn't that I stopped loving them, and have always intended, for the last fifteen years, to plant at least one in Worcestershire (the King's Road specimens, after several peripatetic years, were abandoned in Normandy). But a combination of being unable to decide which one and not having a good place for it kept the project on a long finger. Then I saw *Camellia* 'Cornish Snow' outside Helen Dillon's front door in Dublin, and fell for it, even though it wasn't in flower. It has delicate twisty leaves of a blackish hue.

Seeing it flower on another visit confirmed the decision, and we happened to be having a west-facing wall built, so I reserved a place for it. But before I had a chance to buy one, a friend appeared bearing a rare and slightly tender phlomis (I will remember the species if it comes through three winters and not before) and when I said I had nowhere for it he pointed at the camellia gap and I was forced to give it up out of politeness. Now we have to wait until the phlomis dies, overreaches itself



Like Bette Davis's eyebrows in Now Voyager, camellias can be tamed

or turns out to be too boring to tolerate before we finally get our camellia.

Meanwhile, last year in a Santa Barbara garden called Lotusland, in the Japanese section, I saw some very nicely shaped shrubs in the distance and went for a closer look. They were, to my astonishment, camellias, not in their natural shape, but pruned loosely in the Japanese style, or Niwaki, into a shape a bit like *Cornus controversa*. It was a revelation. I'm not big on fussing and sculpting plants, but an exception might be made for camellias. No longer do we need to look at great lumpy things all year for the sake of a flower in winter. Like Bette Davis's eyebrows in *Now Voyager*, they can be tamed.

Coming back that day, I immediately attacked an oafish camellia that I had been trying not to notice at the front of the California house, reducing it by two thirds, on the cure or kill principle – it has miniature double red flowers, so no one will miss it. Of course it is not ideal to begin with a full grown plant, since to get the proper effect you should be training from youth the branches you want to keep so that they are horizontal. Even so, just being able to see light through the shrub was a hundredfold improvement.



Frank Ronan is a novelist who gardens in both the UK and USA.

I did know, from periodically attacking one that takes over the small back garden of a friend in London, that camellias don't object to the odd massacre. Also, if you think about it, tea is a kind of camellia, which suffers constant pruning, and I might, had I been more intelligent, have had the idea from seeing the beauty of tea estates, without waiting to be hit over the head with it in a Japanese garden. And the worse thing is, now that I know that any camellia can be made respectable, I have to reconsider all the rejects whose flowers alone I have loved. □

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